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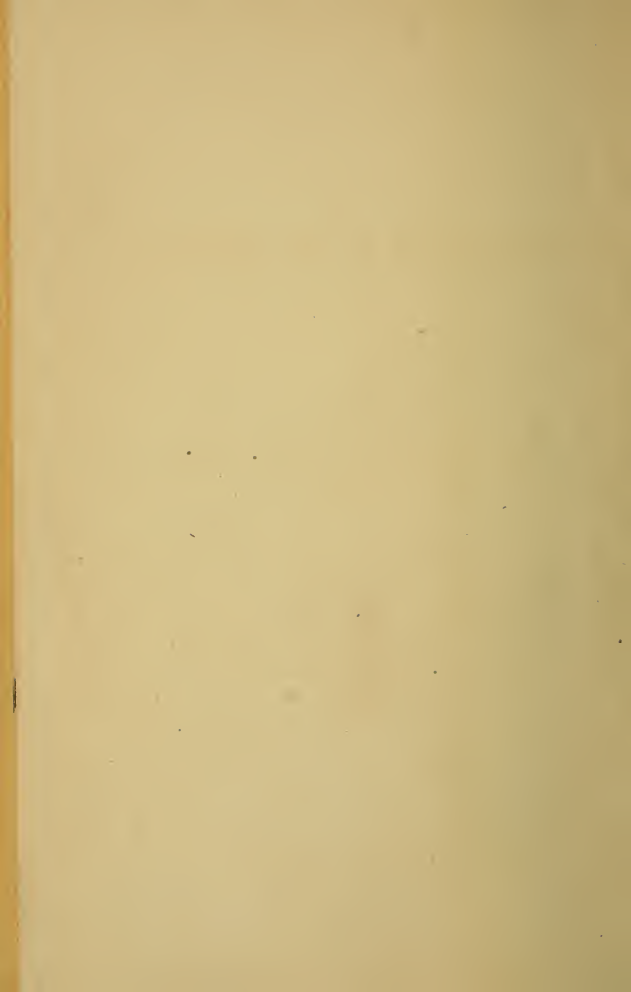
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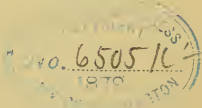


THE GLORIOUS  
SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST.

BY

REV. CORNELIUS TYREE, D. D.,

LIBERTY, VA.



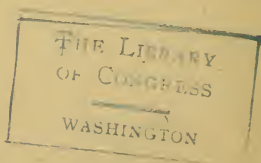
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1879

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## INTRODUCTION.

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It is affirmed by the best physicians that there is not a disease to which the human body is liable for which the God of nature has not, either in the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdom, provided a salutary remedy. Whether this is true or not we do not profess to know. We affirm, however, that there is not an evil that sin has induced in man's body or soul for which a complete remedy has not been provided in the gospel of Jesus Christ. "In him we are complete." "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." He is an all-adequate Saviour. He not only completely delivers his people from the ruin of the fall, but secures to them far greater blessings than they lost in Adam. He not only fully saves them from sin, but secures to them ineffably greater glory, honor, and immortality than they would have inherited had they not fallen. Before knowing how Christ designed to save sinners, no man or angel would have conjectured that he would elevate the sinner higher than he was before his fall. It appeared much more likely that

his standing in the universe would be lowered, even should redeeming mercy pardon and regenerate him. But the wonder of wonders is that Jesus Christ not only fully delivers those who believe in him from all the effects and consequences of sin, but elevates them to the dignity of being in a sense joint-heirs with himself.

In thus saving man, Christ's greatest glory was displayed. In what, then, does the glory of Christ, as displayed in human redemption, consist? We answer, glory is the manifestation of excellency. Christ is possessed of excellencies of three kinds. He has excellencies which belong to him as God; others which belong to him as man; and others which are peculiar to him as God and man united in one person. He has, then, a threefold glory. His glory as absolute God consists in the display of the infinite attributes and excellencies of the Divine nature. This is the glory he possessed with the Father before the world was. His glory as man consisted in the perfect holiness of his heart and life. His glory as God and man united in one person, the Mediator between God and man, consists in his perfect fitness to perform all the works which this office requires of him. This is a new, special, and peculiar glory. This is the glory of

which the apostle John speaks when he says, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This glory consists in his possessing and displaying every excellency and perfection necessary to qualify him for the new and great work of mediating between God and man. He has every qualification necessary to satisfy the claims of God's justice, honor, and law; for the Father declared, by a voice from heaven, that in him he was well pleased. He possesses also everything necessary to excite, encourage, and justify the highest love, gratitude, and confidence of sinful men. In these two respects far more of the divine glory is seen than in all God's works of creation and providence. All other objects derive much of their glory from the person and work of Christ. Separate the glories of creation and providence from their relations to Bethlehem and Calvary, and they pale into insignificancy. It is the glory of the luminaries of heaven, that in their light the stupendous spectacle of the cross was beheld. It is the glory of our earth that it is merely the stage on which is acted out the great drama of redemption. It is the meaning, clew, and honor of all history, secular and religious, that before the coming of Christ it looked forward to his

cross, and will continue to look backward to it till the volume of history is finished and unrolled before the great judgment throne. It is the glory of providence that however rude and mysterious its sweep, all of its dispensations centre in Christ. It is the glory of our earth that he who formed it dwelt on it; of the air, that he breathed it; of the sun, that it shone on him; of the elements, that they nourished him; of the sea, that he walked on it; of the waters, that they refreshed him; and of us men, that he assumed our nature, died for us in it, was buried, arose and ascended to heaven in it, and that in it he intercedes for us before the Divine throne, and rules the universe.

His greatest glory and the greatest glory of the Godhead known to us consists in his being a complete Saviour. Sin produces different evils, and the soul has multiform religious wants. Let us study the respects in which Christ displays his attributes and excellencies in the removal of these evils and in supplying these wants, and thereby we shall behold his glory in our present and eternal salvation.

# THE GLORIOUS SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST.

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## CHAPTER I.

IN JESUS CHRIST THERE IS A SUFFICIENCY OF LIGHT TO DISPEL OUR SPIRITUAL IGNORANCE.

IN one important sense, faith precedes knowledge. In this sense Peter said in the name of all the apostles, "We *believe* and *know* that thou art Christ." But there is another important sense, in religion, in which knowledge must precede faith. "How shall we believe in him of whom we have not heard?" Who would commit a jewel to a stranger? Who would walk over a deep abyss, without inquiring whether the plank was sound or rotten? To be savingly religious, there are certain things in advance, about God, Christ, ourselves, sin, and immortality, we must speculatively and historically

know. There are many important things we would be neither the better for knowing, nor the worse for not knowing. But there are some primal vital matters, pertaining to us as sinful accountable beings, about which we must be informed, or we are undone spiritually for both worlds.

On these vital points Jesus Christ is the light of the world, objectively and subjectively. He is to the world both external illumination and internal vision. He is both sight and light. By being revealed *unto* us and *into* us, he becomes *unto* us the light of life. He is not a star, shining amid surrounding darkness, but a sun, throwing rays of revealed glory on the whole moral scene. Said a great thinker, "Since I have known Christ, I have known everything." He reveals God *unto* us. Said he, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In nature, God is above us ; in providence, God is beyond us ; in law, God is against us ; but in Christ, God is with us, near us, and before us. In the person and character of Christ, the infinite God is so manifested and incarnated, as to be brought within the reach of human senses and apprehensions. All the other revelations we have of God, are piecemeal, partial, fragmentary, and often contradictory ; but the revelation of God in the person and work of

Jesus Christ is full, harmonious, and complete. Elsewhere we see displayed his attributes ; in Christ we see displayed his moral character and his plans, purposes, and feelings towards us as sinners ; how he thinks, loves, pities, and consoles ; how he dislikes pretence, hypocrisy, and self-sufficiency, and how he delights in penitence, humility, ingenuousness and trustfulness. Nor are these all the soul-enlightening disclosures the Son of God makes to us. He not only reveals God to man, but he reveals man to himself. Apart from what Christ was, has said, and has done, who by searching can find out man ? The secret of man is the secret of the Messiah. He solves the mystery of man's origin, character, condition, and destiny. Man's immortality, his separate existence from his body, his capabilities, his danger, and accountability, would not have been fully known but for the mission and work of the Son of God. He not only reveals God's moral character, but makes known, with sunbeam clearness, how sinful man may recover the lost favor and image of his Creator. He makes known how paradise was lost, and how it may be regained ; how man became a sinner, and how he may become a saint. He marks out, as on a map, the way to heaven. In language of living light he discloses

the means by which our sins may be forgiven, our depraved natures renewed, and the rewards of heaven secured.

He is not only the central light of the world's history and the central light of man's soul and being in this life, but he is the only light of man's being and destiny beyond the grave. There are some questions pertaining to the future world we must answer, or our spiritual well-being is impossible. What am I? and whither am I going? Does man cease to be when he ceases to breathe? Does man's soul survive the death of his body, and exist apart from it? Where are the friends whom we have buried? Do they consciously exist? and shall we ever meet and know them again? Why are the righteous afflicted, and why do the wicked flourish? Is there a hell to punish the latter, and a heaven to reward the former? And if so, is there any connection between our manner of living in this world and the rewards and punishments of the world to come?

On these thrilling subjects ancient and modern philosophers, and the scientists and discoverers of our day, do not shed one ray of light. In vain do we linger in the observatory of the astronomer, in the laboratory of the chemist, in the dissecting-room



of the anatomist, or in the lecture-hall of the mental and moral philosopher, in hope of obtaining any satisfactory information on these profoundly sacred matters. The astronomer with his telescope penetrates the deep blue ether, and reveals worlds and systems of worlds, but he cannot look in on the throne of God and tell whether he will forgive sin, or whether he will provide any plan to save the fallen. The chemist cannot with his blowpipe, crucible, and alkalies, torture nature into a revelation of the great secret whether, when a man dies, he will live again. Philosophy, chemistry, astronomy, and fluxions, carry us not one step beyond the grave. The profoundest argument that reason has ever produced for the immortality of the soul is that of Plato, in the *Phædo*; yet who is convinced by that now? Who does not rise from its perusal with the sad conviction that if that argument is all the light we have, then indeed do shadows, doubts, and darkness rest on the whole subject? Said Cicero, in regard to Plato's argument, "I know not why it is, but when I read, I assent, but when I lay down the book and begin myself to reflect on the immortality of the soul, all my assent glides away."

Now when we ignore the teachings and doings of the Divine Word, we are in midnight darkness

in regard to the soul's immortality and the existence of a hell or heaven. Reject the divinity of Christ's mission, and you blot the sun from the moral heavens, restore to death its sting, consign all who have died to an eternal sleep, and leave the living nothing but the miserable alternative of choosing between the cheerless glooms of infidelity or the monstrous shadows of paganism. If Christ was not what he claimed to be, then no man can certainly know whether he has a soul, much less what will become of that soul after he dies ; then we behold nothing in the past but the black gulf of non-existence ; the future becomes an unknown, dreadful hereafter, and fallen man, of all beings, becomes the most hopeless and miserable.

But in Christ's light we see light on our eternal future. The ancient Greeks had one sentence which they believed descended from heaven ; and to evince their gratitude and veneration for this gift, they had it engraved in letters of gold on the fronts of their magnificent temples. We, more favored, not merely have a message, but a Saviour, who came from heaven, dwelt among us, and returned to heaven. He did not reason about immortality. He knew it ; he had it ; he was it ; he had come from the midst of it, and was going back

to it again. The great hereafter, which had been concealed from all lands and ages by the sable horizon of sense and death, he clearly, authoritatively, and commendingly revealed. In the light of what he was, said, and did, the eternal hereafter, with its momentous alternatives, became so conspicuous, that it is only wilful blindness that can fail to see it, and guilty carelessness which can utterly forget it. On some features of our future being he made no disclosures ; but all that is essential to our present and eternal salvation he made known with unmistakable clearness. By telling so many things about the heaven from which he came ; by bringing back to their bodies the spirits of three persons who had lately died—Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus, and the widow's son at Nain ; by himself dying, and then taking up the life he laid down ; by entering paradise between his death and resurrection, "he hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," has rolled away the stone from the tomb of human hope, painted on the black cloud of death the rainbow of immortality, and opened a pathway from this dark world to the paradise of God.

## CHAPTER II.

BUT ignorance of spiritual things is not the only evil of sin, nor the bringing us light the only blessing Christ secures to us. We are as guilty as we are benighted ; HENCE IN JESUS CHRIST THERE IS A FULNESS OF MERIT TO ATONE FOR OUR DEMERIT.

By the demerit of sin we mean its criminality, its heinousness ; and if this is in proportion to the greatness and goodness of the God against whom it is committed, the perfection of the law it violates, the strength of the obligations it defies, and the amount of mischief it produces and tends to produce, then how infinitely criminal are our sins ! And man's sins being infinitely heinous, and consequently justly obnoxious to eternal punishment, then of course nothing that any finite being, however spotless and exalted, can do or be or suffer for sin, can atone for it. Were all men perfect, and were they to love God with all their heart and serve him with all their powers, all this would be but their duty to God. The very laws of their creatureship oblige them to do this. Nor can the angels or the archangels any more merit from God

than the lowest creature. They cannot love with an ardor or serve God with a zeal one jot more than duty prescribes. But Jesus Christ, being above the law, being equal with God, and being under no obligation to fallen man, by voluntarily putting on the vestments of humanity and putting himself under the law, and then by his obedience, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension, performed an extra service to the law and government of God which no finite beings could render, and which is infinitely more than an equivalent for all the rewards that God bestows on the redeemed, and which infinitely more than compensates for all the evils their sins have done to the universe. Do enter into and realize this great gospel truth. The great issue between Christianity and the false religions of the world is just at this point. One reason why the sinner cannot be saved on the ground of his own merits, is that there would be an infinite disproportion between the value of any service he could render God and the glories of an eternal heaven as its reward. Nor would the obedience and sufferings of the Lord Jesus have been sufficiently meritorious to have secured to sinners this reward had he not been very God as well as man. But our Mediator being both divine and human, and having per-

fectly kept and exemplified the precepts of the law, and fully exhausted its penalty ; having as our Substitute fully satisfied the claims of justice and adequately magnified the broken law, and thereby performed a service so infinitely advantageous to God and the universe—a service that so much more glorifies God than would the eternal damnation of the race ; a service that hinders so many evils and originates and promotes so many great interests in the kingdom of God—that it becomes a matter of the strictest justice and propriety in God the Father not only to exempt those from guilt to whom this merit is imputed, but to bestow on them the happiness and glories of heaven. This is what the Scriptures mean by the atonement of Christ. This atonement is perfect and absolutely illimitable. It is not only for the Jewish, or the Gentile, or the learned, or civilized, or moral world, but for the entire race of all ages, lands, characters, classes, and conditions. There has not lived, nor will there ever live, on this earth a sinner, no matter how vile, for whom Christ did not provisionally purchase pardon and merit heaven. No matter how great the guilt of each and of all, Jesus Christ has completely removed every barrier on the part of God in the way of their present and eternal salvation. Were every

sinner of the five continents of the globe to come in one numberless mass to the cross of Christ, they would find sufficient merit to pardon and justify each and all. Not one would be left unsaved. The world's guilt is great, beyond conception ; it does sink deep, soar high, and spread wide ; but it is not so great, does not descend so low, rise as high and spread as wide as the atoning merits of Christ. Sin has abounded, but the meritorious grace of Christ has much more abounded. Even the guilt of the sin against the Holy Ghost, we may well believe, would not transcend the efficacy of Christ's merits, were it not that the sin against the Holy Ghost involves a malignant and determined rejection of Christ.

The merits of Christ are as exhaustless as they are full. No earthly munificence could stand ceaseless applications. Constant demands diminish and exhaust earthly supplies. Earthly fountains will dry up, and the sun that has melted the snows of so many winters and renewed the verdure of so many springs will grow dim with age ; but the efficacy of Christ's atonement not only cannot be exhausted, but is incapable of diminution. The untold millions who have been saved by Christ's blood before us have rendered that blood none the less

efficacious, and we shall make it no less so to the unborn millions who will come after us. The well of his merits will be ever full and flowing. We may apply to it too seldom and ask of it too little ; we cannot apply too often and ask too much.

How gloriously full and valuable is the merit of Christ ! It is the world's great desideratum. With this merit imputed to him, the vilest sinner that ever descended from Adam becomes as guiltless before the law as the angels. Let me possess the treasure of Jesus' infinite merits, and I can pay to the law and justice of God every farthing of the enormous debt I owed them, and in the high court of heaven look round on conscience, on the law, on death, and the devil, and challenge them, saying, "Who dare lay anything to my charge?" Arrayed in Christ's merit, I have on a robe in which omniscient purity sees no blemish. Heaven's portals will joyfully open to all who appear before them clad in this imputed robe, and in it we shall excite the complacency of all heaven. Hear the estimate that Paul put on the meritorious righteousness of Christ : "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, . . . and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law,



but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Hear also the estimate of a saint now in heaven : " In the merits of Christ place all thy trust ; confide in nothing else besides ; to his death commit thyself altogether. With his merits shelter thy whole self ; with them array thyself from head to foot. If the Lord thy God would judge thee, say, ' Lord, between thy judgments and me I cast the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ : no otherwise can I contend with thee.' And if he say thou art a sinner, say, ' I stretch forth the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and thee.' If he say thou art worthy of condemnation, say, ' Lord, I set the merits of our Lord Jesus between my evil deserts and thee, which I offer for the merits which I ought to have, but have not of my own.' If he say he is wroth with thee, say, ' I lift the merits of Christ between thy wrath and me.' " In life, in death, and in the judgment, let the all-sufficient, all-redundant merit of Christ be your ever fresh plea, and your present and eternal salvation will be as certain as the purpose, promise, oath, and power of God can make it.

## CHAPTER III.

IN JESUS CHRIST WE HAVE A FULNESS OF TRUTH AND EVIDENCE TO REMOVE OUR UNBELIEF AND INDUCE US TO EXERCISE THE STRONGEST FAITH IN HIM.

By disbelief we lost the favor and image of God, and it is only by believing in the Son of God that the Divine favor and image can be regained. But faith must have an approachable, divine, and adequate object. Such is Jesus Christ. He is not only all that God the Father can require in a Mediator, but he meets all that unbelief can demand in the way of objection. Of all beings he is the most accessible, reliable, and trustworthy. Nor is this all the truth in regard to him. In the highest sense he is the truth itself. The Bible is the truth written in sixty-six independent volumes. But Jesus Christ is the truth concentrated and incarnated. He is the living centre, in which all the lines of Old and New Testament truth meet and are embodied; and as a living local exemplification of the truth, he is the mightiest of all arguments for the divinity and importance of his religion.

The great question of this age is, "What think ye of Christ?" and we thank the infidel biographers of Jesus for urging it on the attention of the world. The question at issue between them and the friends of Christ, is whether the Christ of the four gospels is both divine and human. We accept the issue, and on it rest the divinity and success of our holy religion. If he was both God and man, then Christianity cannot be false; if he was not, then it cannot be true. If the historical Jesus of the New Testament is not divine, then the world's history has no meaning, aim, or clew, the church no adequate foundation to rest on, Christianity becomes a fable and our hope of heaven a dream. But if the character and work of the Redeemer are divine, and the sum and substance of the Bible; if he is the centre around which all the great events of the world, secular and religious, have revolved in constant subserviency; if he is the life-blood of our civilization and literature, the very foundation and sanction of our laws and institutions; if all around us he is transforming lives and characters, and we hear him breathed from the lips and behold him exemplified in the lives of our nearest friends—how can we honestly doubt and disbelieve him?

The argument, from the history and person of

Christ, for the divinity and importance of his gospel, is masterful because it is not an abstraction, or a myth, but a matter of fact. His birth in Bethlehem, his residence in Nazareth, his baptism in the Jordan, his sermon on the mount, his agony in Gethsemane, his death on Calvary, his resurrection from Joseph's new tomb, and his ascension from Mount Olivet, are well-known, well-attested historical facts. The time and place of their occurrence are well-known. The saying of Christ's advent and life is worthy of all acceptation, because they are literally and historically true. Ponder these facts with attention, and you must, can, and will believe. Read his beautiful life; witness his miracles; follow him in his journeys; behold him die on Calvary; see him arise and ascend to heaven. In fine, study, not Christianity, but Christ; ponder, not redemption, but the Redeemer, not salvation, but the living, moving Saviour, that was, and is, and ever will be, and the mind will be convinced, and the heart savingly won to him.

In the person, character, and work of Christ is included and offered all that God can give, and all that man can need. Every trait and work, essential to constitute him in every respect trustworthy, centres in him. What excellency, what qualifica-

tion can you desire or imagine that is not found in Christ? In what respect would you have a Saviour otherwise than our Christ, in order to believe in him? Are you afraid he is not strong enough to save you? But can you desire a deliverer stronger than the "mighty God"? Do your exigences demand greater than infinite strength? Do you hesitate to venture your soul on him, from a fear that he is not now the same compassionate Saviour he was while on earth? But though he is on the throne of the universe, he is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Do you have misgivings from an apprehension that he is not now as literally present and as accessible as he was in the days of his flesh? But he is really more essentially present now than he was then. Hear him. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He is all around you, and can be approached more quickly and intimately than you can approach the nearest earthly friend. Are you faithless from a fear that his mediation is not sufficiently prevalent with God the Father? But is he not "the only begotten Son" of the Father? And has not the Father proclaimed to the world that he is willing to accept and save any sinner who will come unto

him through his Son? Do you demand before committing your soul to him that he shall have furnished some extraordinary evidence of his willingness to save sinners? But what more effective proofs can he give than the humiliations of Bethlehem and the agonies of Calvary? Do you still say, "I cannot go to him self-invited. Before I can venture my all into his hands, he must give me an undoubted assurance of his willingness to save me"? Then, doubting soul, hear him inviting you to his cross and bosom, "and be not faithless but believing." To you he says, "Him that *cometh* to me, I will in no wise cast out." "*Come* unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" and in this connection the words "cometh" and "come" ought to be more melodious to your ear than the tones of an angel's harp, and more soothing to your spirit than the fanning of an angel's wings. What is there that can encourage you to believe, that is not found in the person, work, and words of Christ? All that is great, and powerful, and wise, and faithful, and patient, and endearing; all that is faithworthy in divinity, and attractive in humanity, is embodied in Jesus Christ; and if so is not unbelief a crime against reason; against thy soul, and against thy God?

## CHAPTER IV.

IN JESUS CHRIST THERE IS A FULNESS OF MERCY  
TO PARDON OUR SINS.

There are two common snares in which the great enemy ruins souls. One is the snare of self-righteous presumption. Such as are captivated in this snare, being righteous in their own estimation, have no appreciation of Christ. The other is the snare of despair ; and more are destroyed by despair than by presumption, not because there are more who despair than there are who presume, but because it is so much more difficult to get out of the snare of despair. When once a man says, "There is no hope for me," he becomes utterly discouraged and abandoned ; and the despondence he feels is the strongest link in the chain that binds him to an unconverted state. Now the only remedy for such is to keep before them the compassionate, amiable, inviting character of Christ.

Go stand at the base of yon high mountain, and as you behold its huge top kissing the clouds, you will conclude that there is not enough water on this

globe to submerge that mountain. But sail out to mid ocean and measure its depths, and you will find enough water to submerge, not only the Peaks of Otter, but also the Alps and the Himalayas. In like manner, so long as the sinner remains amid the dark mountains of his sins, and continues only to look on them, he will despairingly conclude there is no forgiveness for him. But let him acquaint himself with the dying love of Christ, let him go to the cross of Calvary, and he will find an ocean of forgiving mercy broad enough and deep enough to cover all his sins, however numerous and criminal.

If you will read carefully the Scriptures you will find that such is the compassion of Christ for the chief of sinners, that he is infinitely more anxious to save them than they are to be saved. In the provisions of his atonement, and in the invitations of his Gospel, he excepts none. While on earth he welcomed to his bosom of mercy the vilest and the guiltiest. He pitied those whom others spurned; received those whom others rejected; and loved those whom others loathed. It was his glory and delight then, as it is his glory and delight now, to save sinners, even the chief of sinners. Never from the day of his death till now has he refused to forgive a sinner, however vile, who sincerely desired



forgiveness. Never has he thrust away from his cross one who sincerely asked to be saved by its blood. Not one, since the dying thief, has applied to him for pardon and been rejected. Never in the world of woe has it been said,

“Here’s a soul that perished suing  
For the boasted Saviour’s aid.”

Have any of the great crowd that have gone down to death anywhere left it on record, that they applied to the Redeemer for salvation and were repulsed? Not one such can be found either on earth or in hell. When two persons are at variance, the presumption always is that the inferior, offending, necessitous party will be the more anxious for reconciliation. But what is a reasonable presumption in other cases, is not the fact in regard to Christ and the sinner. Here, all the deep anxiety, all the sacrifices and efforts for amity, are on Christ’s side. If the irreligious were one thousandth part as much concerned about their own salvation as Christ is, then the way to hell would become a dreary waste, and the way to heaven be crowded with converts as numerous as the stars of the midnight heavens. When human governments issue proclamations of amnesty, they make exceptions. In the time of the American Revolution, Samuel Adams

and John Hancock were excepted by name in the royal proclamation of amnesty. But Jesus Christ, in his amnesty proclamation to this rebellious world, makes no such exceptions. Let us read it: "Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Or read it as given by another evangelist: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." And what is the preaching of the Gospel to every creature, but the wide and universal offer, a full and free pardon to every sinner on the ground of Christ's sufferings and resurrection?

But the compassion of Christ towards the chief of sinners is most encouragingly illustrated and attested in the example of those whom he has saved. Look at the thief on the cross. Who that heard that hardened ruffian robber join his fellow and the base crowd in insulting the dying Saviour, could have believed it possible that that very day he would be a trophy of the pardoning love of the very Jesus whom he blasphemed? While he was ripe for hell, just as he was going over the edge of the pit, he was awakened and his dry lips quivered forth the prayer,—"Lord, remember me when thou comest

into thy kingdom.” Did Christ respond, “I cannot remember you now; I am in too much pain; besides it is too late for you”? Oh no, but he turned upon him a look of love and said, “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” So that before the sun of that day had set behind Judah’s hills the soul of this thief, pardoned and sanctified, had taken its flight to heaven, and told to listening angels what redeeming mercy had done for him. Thus the Redeemer erected, close by his cross, a monument of his ability and willingness to save the greatest sinners, in the greatest extremity, that no sinner to the end of time might despair.

He saved his own murderers; one, while he was dying, and many soon after. The centurion who commanded that brutal band that crucified him, who presided over that whole scene of horrid mockery, who ordered every nail to be driven through his quivering flesh, and some of his blood-stained crew, being convinced by the darkness and the earthquake, appear to have been transfixed with fear, remorse, and penitence, and before they left the spot may have been washed in the blood they had just shed, for they glorified God, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

Nor did death in the least diminish his compas-

sion for those who had crucified him. Hear the terms of his last great commission. It was to preach repentance and remission of sins in his name, among all nations, "*beginning at Ferusalem.*" While the cross on which he died was still crimsoned with his blood, while the eyes of his enemies were still gleaming with the fire of triumphant revenge, he commissions his apostles to go first and offer his murderers the refusal of his great salvation. All human gospels seek first the least depraved. It was the command of Jesus that his gospel should first be offered to his murderers. As if he had said, "Go tell those who imprecated the awful curse, 'His blood be upon us and our children,' that that blood, if they will, shall be upon them first as a pardoning immortal blessing. Go tell cowardly Pilate that the blood with which he bought his peace with the mob, if he will, shall buy his peace with God. Go tell the poor heartless jesters who jeered at my agonies, saying, 'If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross,' that I have not only come down but ascended to my throne, and that, if they will, my first of act of clemency shall be their pardon. Go seek out the Pharisees, scribes, and elders, and tell them they never thirsted for my blood as intensely as I desire their salvation. Go and tell my

murderers that they inflicted a deep wound on conscious innocency when they crucified me, but they will inflict one far deeper by refusing the pardon I offer them."

Accordingly, forty-nine days after, on the day of Pentecost, he verified this offer and saved his crucifiers. Peter charged home on them the atrocious deed. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." And while he yet spoke the risen Saviour sent down the Holy Ghost, and brought to repentance and mercy three thousand of these enemies of Christ at once. Hear how Bunyan discourses of their repentance and forgiveness. Peter, in his Master's name, said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in his name, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Objection. "But I was one of them that plotted to take away his life. May I be saved by him?"

Peter. "Every one of you."

Objection. "But I was one of them that bore false witness against him. Is there forgiveness for me?"

Peter. "Every one of you."

Objection. "But I was one of them that cried out, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' and desired that Barabbas the murderer might live, rather than take him. What will become of me, think you?"

"I am to preach repentance and remission of sins in his name to every one of you," says Peter.

Objection. "But I was one of them that spit in his face when he stood before his accusers; I was also one that mocked him when in anguish he hanged bleeding on the tree. Is there room for me?"

"Every one of you," says Peter.

Objection. "But I was one of them that in his extremity said, 'Give him gall and vinegar to drink.' Why may I not expect the same when anguish and guilt are upon me?"

Peter. "Repent of these your wickednesses, and here is remission of sins for every one of you."

Objection. "But I railed on him; I reviled him; I hated him; I rejoiced to see him mocked by others. Can there be hopes for me?"

Peter. "There is remission of sins for every one of you."

They did repent, were forgiven, and were baptized. Thus three thousand, of a people who had committed the most atrocious deed ever perpetra-

ted, were admitted to the bosom they had pierced, and received from the face they had smitten and marred nothing but smiles and love. Who, then, this side of hell, need despair?

Look at Saul of Tarsus. Never before nor since was there a more unlikely subject of conversion to Christ than this fierce and intrepid Jew. His education, his religion, his zeal, his prospects, his learning, his pride, and his powerful intellect, were all so much under the influence of wrong impressions, that his conversion to Christianity seemed almost as hopeless as that of Satan himself. He was the vanguard leader of Apollyon's host against the cause of Christ. But while he was going on his mission of blood to Damascus, while urging his journey with anxious speed, foaming with rage and feasting his heart with the anticipation of Christian tears and blood, the Lord Jesus descended from heaven in the habiliments of his glory and meets him. And has He met him because His patience is exhausted? Has His right hand taken hold on vengeance to smite this arch enemy dead at His feet? Oh no; it is the compassionate Jesus still. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" The trembling rebel cries, "Who art thou, Lord?" The Lord tenderly replies, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." And then

and there his sins were forgiven and his heart was changed; and surely a hotter brand was never quenched in the blood of atonement, a more conspicuous instance of redeeming grace was never recorded in the annals of redemption. In his conversion Satan's kingdom sustained its greatest loss, and Christianity won her greatest trophy. Never before nor since were as many germs of mighty moral power wrapped up in the conversion of one sinner. Jesus Christ had many high purposes in his conversion. One was that he might be an example of his compassion to great sinners in all after ages. Hence said Paul of himself, "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." When men bestow favors, they sometimes enjoin secrecy on those they relieve, lest they should be burdened with new applications; but when Jesus Christ forgives sinners, he wishes them to proclaim it to the world, that they may be patterns of mercy to encourage others to trust in him.

Who were the Corinthians before their conversion? "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor cov-



etous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you : but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." Is it not a wonder that God did not burn such vile persons from the face of the earth ? Can the worst descend any lower in the scale of dark depravity than did these Corinthians ? And yet the pardoning, sanctifying compassion of Christ did not except them ; and will he except you, my reader ?

And what more shall we say ! The time would fail to tell of an Augustine, who after an early life of dissipation ; of the Earl of Rochester, who after a life of abandoned and gross sensuality ; of Col. Gardner, who after being steeped in profligacy ; of John Newton, who after being a slave-dealer ; of John Bunyan, who after having been notoriously profane ; of Ko-Thah-Byee, the Burman general, who after his soul was incrustated with the guilt of thirty cold-blooded murders—went in the dark hour of their conscious guilt to the Lord Jesus, and were abundantly pardoned. Many millions of others, not less guilty than these, have been pardoned, purified, and admitted to heaven. Millions of others are now on their way to the bright land, who, after they

had been sunk in sensuality or hardened in infidelity, after they had been distinguished for the sins of impiety, injustice, intemperance, and inhumanity, sought and found the forgiving love of the Redeemer. Oceans have their bounds, the far-travelling sun has its orbit, but the pardoning mercy of Christ is confined to no limit of time or age or guilt or class or character. It is bound by **no conditions** but that you accept it.

## CHAPTER V.

IN JESUS CHRIST THERE IS A FULNESS OF PATIENCE AND FORBEARANCE TO BEAR WITH OUR PROVOCATIONS.

No other being in the universe would be able to bear with our imperfections and provocations as Christ does. If the meekest man on earth, or the most merciful angel in heaven, were intrusted with the best of us, as Christ is, he would soon abandon his charge. The most patient mother was never one-thousandth part as tender and patient towards her sick, fretful child as Christ is towards his erring disciples. Some are afraid to become the decided followers of Christ, lest by their remaining sins they should provoke the Redeemer to abandon them, and thereby they bring dishonor upon both themselves and his cause. Let such consider the faithfulness and patience of the Lord Jesus, and be afraid no more. Christ does not cast off his believing people because of their short-comings and infirmities. It is his glory to pass over the faults of his people, make the most of their weak graces, heal their backslidings, and pardon their many sins.

“He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.” As a father pitieth his own children, so he pitieth them that fear him ; as one whom his mother comforteth, so will he comfort his people. He may correct them occasionally in love ; he may gently reprove them at times ; but he will never, never give them up. The devil shall never be able to pluck them out of his hand. If they fall, he will raise them up ; if they wander from the right way, he will gently bring them back ; if they faint, he will revive them ; if they err, he will teach them. In a word, notwithstanding their stupidity, unbelief, and cowardice, he carries them all the way to heaven in his loving arms.

See how patiently he bore himself towards his people while he was on earth. Once two of his disciples wished to call down fire from heaven and consume a village because it did not receive them kindly. He meekly rebuked them, saying, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” On the very night of his betrayal, when he was preparing his disciples for the coming events, they interrupted and grieved him by an altercation as to who should be greatest in his approaching reign ; for which he did not denounce

them, but gently taught them that the greatest in his kingdom would be he that served him most zealously. He selected three of his most spiritual and faithful apostles to watch and pray with him during his agony in Gethsemane; and three times during the awful struggle he came to them seeking sympathy, and three times found them asleep. Did he upbraid them? No; he kindly apologized for their unbelieving stupidity, saying, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Witness his dealings with fallen Peter. How many flagrant sins did Peter's denial of his Lord involve! What church would have restored him immediately after such a fall? Behold him in the hall of the high priest. Self-condemned, with the oath of denial yet quivering on the lips, bending under the weight of his remorse, overwhelmed at his own atrocity, he turns towards the judgment-seat, and his eye meets the eye of his Saviour. Did the face of Christ lower with vengeance towards his fallen apostle? Did Jesus reproach him for deserting him at that trying time? Oh, no; Peter beheld in the face of his Lord nothing but the expressions of undying love. His features were not darkened by a single cloud of reproach. They were as unclouded as when he stood in the glory of the holy Mount of

Transfiguration. There beamed forth from that saddened countenance nothing but a patient, forbearing, forgiving love. "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter;" and that look of undiminished love broke the power of the tempter, smoothed the knitted brow, quelled the wrathful eye, opened the fountains of grief, and restored the fallen apostle. Witness his kindness to doubting Thomas. When told that the Lord was risen, he most unreasonably assails the very foundation of Christianity by affirming that he would not believe that Christ had arisen, except he could see in his hands the prints of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side. Behold the condescension and kindness of Christ in dealing with this disbelieving man. Instead of abandoning him, he pities his errors and infirmities. He seeks to bring back this poor strayed sheep with unspeakable tenderness and patience. He suffers Thomas to prescribe, and complies with his unreasonable standard of faith. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing."

Was this the character of Christ eighteen hundred years ago? He is still the same. Though he is on the throne of the universe, he cherishes the

same unconquerable love and patience towards his people. There he sits above these visible heavens with the very same forbearing love towards all his erring disciples of earth that he exhibited to fallen Peter in the hall of the high priest. There, with infinite tenderness and patience, he pleads with the Father for the pardon of his people's sins as they arise, and for the acceptance of their persons and services. His government of the universe is exercised for the good of his disciples. He occupies the throne, not merely to manage worlds and empires, but to govern, teach, sanctify, lead, and finally save his church. In training his people for heaven, they may raise temporary walls of separation between him and themselves, but nothing they can do can exhaust his love and patience. He feels for and nurses each one as a mother feels for and nurses her sick and froward infant ; and he will not rise from his throne of mediation till he has brought the last one of them home to glory.

It is greatly essential to the Christian's growth in grace and usefulness that he have adequate views of the boundless extent of the tenderness and pardoning mercy of his Saviour. Many believe it is great, but are far from seeing how great it is. They believe he can forgive them once, twice, thrice, and

they find that he does so. But when they have been betrayed into repeated sins, after having been repeatedly forgiven, they suppose he has become weary of forgiving them, and thus they remain oppressed, gloomy, and useless. But let such remember that it is the glory of Christ not only to pardon many sinners and many sins, but the same sinners and the same sins many times. Peter once came to our Lord with this question, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? until seven times?" He thought he proposed a large number of times. But Christ replied, "I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven." That is, he requires us to forgive each other four hundred and ninety times. And think you he directs his people to outdo him in patience and in pardoning? It is a glorious gospel truth, that however repeatedly and heinously Christ's disciples may sin against him, they will invariably find him more ready to forgive than they are to repent. Let no one say, I have already been forgiven so often that I dare not and cannot ask forgiveness again. It is almost as though there were a contest between Christ and his people which shall exceed, they in trespassing or he in forgiving. See them by their ingratitude, cowardice, indolence, unbelief, neglect,



and in a thousand other ways, wounding him in the house of his friends. And see him in return forgiving them and bestowing on them the rich blessings of his grace. Christian, can you contemplate such a Saviour without shame and sorrow for your sins, without again and again going to him for forgiveness, and without devoting your all to his service?

## CHAPTER VI.

IN JESUS CHRIST THERE IS A FULNESS OF GRACE  
TO SANCTIFY US.

If civil law had any device by which, when she pardons criminals, she could renovate them, make them hate their crimes, and be law-abiding, virtuous citizens, then our worldly rulers might make a proclamation of amnesty to all its convicts. But worldly governments have no such transforming device, and hence may not pardon burglars, counterfeiters, thieves, and murderers without deep injury to society. But no such injury results to the divine government as to human society from the pardon of great sinners, because in every case those whom the King of Zion forgives he renews; all whom Christ justifies he sanctifies; all from whom, by his atoning cross, he takes away the guilt and curse of sin, he, by his renewing Spirit, takes also its dominion and defilement. By the one he changes our state, by the other our nature; by the one he entitles us to heaven, by the other he makes us meet for it. What is the gospel? It consists in a vicarious Calvary to take away man's guilt, and a

Holy Ghost to subdue his depravity. But as all the means of our sanctification derive their existence and efficacy from Christ, he is both the world's Atoner and Purifier; and as no degree of guilt transcends the merit of his cross, so no instance of depravity is beyond the converting and sanctifying power of his Spirit. His renewing grace is as limitless as his pardoning mercy. He is just as able and as willing to deliver his people from the defilement as he is from the guilt of their sins. The latter he does completely and at once; the former he does gradually and partly on earth, and completes in heaven.

The effects of sin in the mind, heart, passions, and conduct of the sinner are great beyond conception, and beyond the reach of all human appliances, but in no case are they beyond the reach of the invincible grace of our risen, reigning Redeemer. By his enlightening, sanctifying Spirit he can trace the stream of human corruption to its source, and purify the fountain itself. The sanative influence of his blood follows the moral disease through every vein it has envenomed, neutralizes the poison, and restores vigor and purity to the whole moral constitution. It is the glory of our Saviour that he never turns away from any sinner on account of his

defilement. He has already regenerated and purified some of the most impure of our race and made them fit temples for his own abode. He can take the most bigoted Pharisee and implacable Jew, and transmute him into a model Christian and an earnest preacher of the faith he once tried to destroy. He did this with Saul of Tarsus. He can change the most superstitious, blinded devotee of Romanism into the clearest, mightiest upholder of the great doctrine of justification by faith alone the uninspired church has ever had. He did this in the case of Martin Luther. He can take a man proverbial for his vulgarity and profanity, and so renovate, enlarge, sanctify, and ennoble him, as to make him not only a bright exemplification of his purifying grace, but cause him to write a religious book which stands unequalled since the apostolic day. He did this in the person of John Bunyan. He can take the profane, licentious, infidel captain of a slave-ship, and so mightily transform him as to make him not only an eminent Christian minister, but the writer of letters and hymns which will be read and sung as long as the English language is spoken. He did this in the case of John Newton.

It has been said that, after all, Christians are no better than others. If this is true, then is Chris-

tianity a failure in one essential respect ; then Christ is not a complete Saviour. But there are untold millions of examples that abundantly refute this charge. All around us are living attestations that the grace of Christ makes the intemperate sober, the impure chaste, the proud humble, the revengeful forgiving, the covetous liberal, the repining submissive, and the profane devout. The grace of our Redeemer rectifies the seat of being. By his regenerating Spirit he extirpates rebellion from the human will, unfaithfulness from the memory, error from the judgment, carnality from the affections, and folly from the imagination. He can so transform and reverse the desires, tastes, and principles of the soul as to make a man love what he once hated, and hate what he once loved. He can expel from the soul its sinful loves and proclivities, by begetting a new spiritual love. He extinguishes in the soul the love of sin by awakening in it the superior pleasures and hopes of his religion. Herein is the difference between the evangelical conversion that Jesus by his Spirit effects in the life and character of man, and a mere moral reformation. In the one case sin is merely avoided from worldly motives, while it is still loved ; in the other it is abandoned and shunned because it is abhorred.

The sins which the moral man merely avoids out of regard to his character, or from the fear of consequences, Jesus inclines his people to hate and willingly renounce. The evils which the moral man only restrains and abates, the world's Redeemer eradicates. Hence the one appears far better than he really is ; and the subject of grace is far better than he appears to be. The one is only apparently improved in some respects ; the other, in principle, desire, and aim, is in reality and appearance improved in every respect. It is in this way that Jesus gradually, yet effectually and thoroughly, saves his people from the love, bondage, pollution, and practice of sin.

Every Christian is the subject of a radical transformation, not only in his actions, but in his disposition. In this world Jesus saves every one of his true disciples from the love and dominion of every sin. There is no unknown sin that such a man does not wish to discover, and no sin discovered which he does not loathe and resolve to abandon, and no sin which he hates and resolves to forsake that he does not strive and labor to destroy — denying themselves of all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

But why are not Christians more completely delivered from sin than they are? Why are not the best of the friends of Christ better and holier than they are? Why is our faith so weak? Why are our hopes so dull, our desires so feeble, our love so cold, and our religious characters so indistinct, unremarkable, and uninfluential? Why are there so many who seem to aim at and to possess no more than just enough religion to keep them out of hell? Are we straitened in Christ? Is he not as able and as willing to sanctify us as he is to justify us? Do not all our personal, as well as relative wants, find in him a corresponding supply? And is it not as essential to his glory that his people be delivered from the pollution of sin, as it is that they be saved from the curse of sin? Why, in fine, with such an infinitude of sanctifying resources in our Redeemer, are we no more like him in temper and conduct than we are? Because we too much rely upon ourselves and the subordinate means of grace, and do not with sufficient frequency and strength of faith apply to the Lord Jesus Christ. If all the light in the universe dwells in the sun, how can we obtain light except from the sun? Were all the water in the world in one reservoir, how could any obtain water without applying to that reservoir?

Equally evident it is that if all the grace that purifies the heart dwells only in Jesus Christ, then none can grow in religious purity without a believing application to Christ. Here is the source of our meagre piety. We look to other means of religious growth than the fulness of Christ. But we can no more be sanctified without the grace of Christ than we can be pardoned without his mercy. Christian, make the experiment, and you will find that one believing prayer to Christ for the impartation of his light and strength and love will do more to extinguish the fire of lust and passion, overcome temptation, and exalt, ennoble, and refine the soul, than the most earnest and systematic use of all the subordinate means of grace. You will never grow in holiness in any other way. But aim daily of his fulness to receive, "and grace for grace." As your temptations, needs, and sins arise, cultivate the habit of going to him who "is full of grace and truth." Appropriate to your necessities "the fulness of him that filleth all in all," and you will find that you cannot and dare not wilfully sin.

Whether, then, you want victory over temptations, or stronger faith, or a brighter hope, or intenser love, or greater courage, or a tenderer conscience, or more humility, or more meekness, or



more strength of religious principles, or more light, or peace of mind, go to your Saviour, and you will be freely and abundantly supplied. He will not work in you unmixed purity this side the grave, but at death he will perfect that which concerneth you, and present your soul faultless before his Father's throne with exceeding joy. Glorious Saviour, that thus sanctifies those whom he justifies !

## CHAPTER VII.

IN JESUS THERE IS A FULNESS OF MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EXCELLENCE FOR OUR IMITATION AND TRANSFORMATION.

The sanctification of which we have spoken consists in deliverance from sin. This, though unspeakably great, is only a negative blessing. When man is saved from sin he only stands equal to Adam before his fall. But the Christian is not only redeemed from sin, but is raised to a positive resemblance of Christ—is actually conformed to the image of the Son of God. In Jesus Christ the Christian has an approachable, imitable, perfect, and attractive model. He is the bright contrast of everything we should shun, and the embodiment of everything we should aim at. In the brightness of his example our every sin, whether of defect or excess, is made to appear infinitely detestable, and in that example is harmoniously displayed every virtue essential, when imitated, to exalt us in religious excellence above the angels; and how it enhances the glory of our Redeemer's character to be

both a Propitiation for sins and a Pattern for our lives !

When Napoleon Bonaparte retreated from Russia he saved a fragment of his army from utter destruction by the force of his own example. Foregoing the privilege of his rank, he dismounted from his horse, and put himself not only at the head of his men, but on a level with them. He shared their hard beds, lived on their scanty rations ; every foot they walked he walked, every foe they faced he faced, and every hardship they endured he bore. The result was, that teaching and encouraging them by his own example, saying to them, not Forward, but Follow, he could lead them even up to the cannon's mouth. So Jesus Christ is the Captain, not of a small retreating, but of a large invading army, which will finally be victorious over Satan, the world, and the flesh, because, amid other reasons, he inspires his sacramental host by the force of his own example. One of the unspeakable advantages of his religion is, that he not only, by precept and doctrine, tells us in what his service consists, but by his own example he has shown us how to perform it. He goes before us. He sets us an example that we may follow his steps. When we hesitate, or go astray, or stumble, we not only hear

his voice behind us saying, "This is the way ; walk ye in it," but we see his incarnate lovely form before us, sometimes nearer and sometimes farther, sometimes more and sometimes less distinct, according to the keenness of our vision and the clearness of our spiritual atmosphere. But even when our eyes are dimmest and our heavens are haziest, if we are believers, we can still see him. Notwithstanding the mist and smoke and dust of unbelief, we can still discern a form like that of the Son of man, not merely pointing out the path, but often clearing away the obstructions in it, opening unexpected passages, transforming difficulties into helps, levelling mountains, filling up valleys, and bridging streams that seem impassable. Oh, what a blessed thing to have Christ for our Exemplar !\* How can our hopes sink or our fears prevail while our Fore-runner embodies his religion in our sight ? Often some of us fall exhausted and faint on the way ; but when we see the way marked with the tears and blood of our Master, we recover new strength and resume the journey.

Study the example of Christ aright, and you can hardly find a phase of Christian experience that does not find something in the life of the Man of

\* Dr. J. A. Alexander.

Nazareth answering to it. We serve a Master who trod every step that he would have us tread, bore every burden he would have us bear, met every temptation he would have us meet, shared every grief that he would have us share, and did every duty he would have us do. Many defeat the influence of Christ's example by exalting it so high that it is beyond the reach of their sympathy and imitation. But the chief glory of our Lord's example is that it is singularly accessible and imitable. Of all lives, his was the most communicable and practicable, most within the reach of the sympathy and resemblance of the true believer. Read his life carefully, and you will see him exemplarily teaching you how to do the very things it is most important you should do in order to be thoroughly religious. Would you know how to meet and overcome temptations; how to regard and treat your enemies; how to be a good son, a good friend, a good neighbor, and a good citizen; how to sympathize with and treat the guilty, down-trodden, and offcast; how to meet and bear the afflictions of life; how to understand and observe the ordinances of the gospel; how to appreciate and use the means of grace; how to win and convert the ungodly; in a word, how to meet your obligations to God, to yourself, to

the world, and to the church, prayerfully study the example of Christ. And again, would you supply your Christian character with every missing temper and trait, then compare your character with his, and strive to conform your life to his in all respects in which you are unlike him. How infinitely great the contrast! Do you mourn over your remaining pride? In prayerful dependence on the helps of his Spirit, study the character of him who was meek and lowly in mind, and you will find yourself growing humble, even as he was. Do you find it hard to forgive those who have wronged you? Behold him when dying praying that his murderers might be forgiven. Is indolence your besetting sin? Behold him not fixing himself in Jerusalem, and requiring those who needed his aid to seek him, but leading an itinerant, migratory life, going about doing good; here teaching the ignorant, there reclaiming the depraved; to-day healing the diseased and soothing the sorrowful, to-morrow casting out devils, pardoning the guilty, and raising the dead. Are your prayers cold, brief, and infrequent? Behold him retiring to solitary mountains, and spending whole nights in secret communion with his Father. In sum, our Redeemer was an attractive pattern of all that is pure and lovely and of good

report—of all that is kind and benevolent and merciful. He was a model of self-denial, of forgiveness of injuries, of patience amid the greatest wrongs, of active usefulness in the face of the greatest discouragements. Now let his disciples habitually study his character in these regards, and habitually rely on his strength to enable them to imbibe his spirit and copy his traits, and they will grow in likeness to his image and in preparation for usefulness and for the enjoyment of his immediate presence. The best of earth have their defects; hence if we take them for our models, the time will come when we shall equal them. But Christ's excellencies are limitless, and hence through all time and eternity, as the redeemed shall continue to grow in moral worth and loveliness, the character of Christ will continue to unfold new excellencies, as they shall be capable of appreciating and imitating them, in endless progression; and in thus becoming the accessible, attractive, perfect model of his saints, and in transforming them into his own image, in those who once displayed the very image of Satan himself, he is far more glorified than he is in the shining of a thousand worlds. Oh, it is a great thing in religion to have a divine imitable model after which to shape our lives! Do not rely on

Christ as a Mediator less, but copy him more closely as a model. That you may be justified before God without works, know nothing among men but Jesus crucified; and that you may illustrate and prove your faith by your works, know nothing save Christ exemplified. Knowing Christ in these two respects is the religion that honors God and saves the soul.



## CHAPTER VIII.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST IS SEEN ALSO IN HIS FULLNESS OF MORAL BEAUTY AND ATTRACTIVENESS FOR US TO LOVE.

Man is so made that he must love some object supremely, and whatever he loves most is his god. He can no more live morally without loving something supremely, than he can live physically without breathing. But in whom can he find a being worthy of supreme love? Where in the universe is there one within the reach of his affections whom he may safely and savingly love with all his heart, mind, and strength? The first and chiefest of all commandments, yea, the sum of all is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul. But who can love or think of an impersonal, absolute God? He eludes our thoughts and affections. Nor are we sufficiently acquainted with the angels to fasten on them the affections of our souls—they are but creatures; and the best of mankind are finite and stained with imperfections. To love the greatest and best of earth supremely, is to deify them and degrade ourselves. But the historical Jesus of

the four Gospels meets this deep want of our souls. Amid all other persons and characters of the universe, He who was born in Bethlehem, brought up at Nazareth, was baptized in the Jordan, opened his lips on the mount, walked by the Sea of Galilee, who healed and fed and comforted, and died on the cross, he, he is just the person and character whom we may and can and ought to love with all our mind, heart, and strength. Love is a powerfully transforming principle. Every one tends to resemble the object of his supreme attachment. If he loves an object sordid and mean, he will become sordid and mean himself ; while, if he love an object grand and pure, he will become refined and elevated. It is so in loving Jesus Christ. He being the greatest among the pure, and the purest among the great, the perfection of all beauty and the centre of all excellency, it follows that in proportion to the intensity of our love for him will we be renewed, purified, and ennobled. Yet it will not be religiously safe for us to love him supremely unless there is in him an infinitude of moral beauty. But this is just the glorious trait he possesses. He is infinitely lovely and loving.

Earth has never yet produced a man as great and as good as he might have been. Hence when

we would form an ideally perfect character, we have to bring together and combine traits from many originals. From one we borrow his magnanimity, from another his sweetness and affability, from another his tender sympathy, from another his disinterestedness, from another his meekness and courage, from another his patience, from another his self-mastery, and from another his deep devotion. But let us bring forward all the excellencies of the excellent of earth, all that was pure in Joseph, meek in Moses, and patient in Job ; the tenderness of a John and the heroism of a Paul ; the friendship of a Jonathan ; the wisdom of a Newton and the benevolence of a Howard. To these attractions of humanity add all the excellencies of the angels. Clothe these with all the charms which your imagination can supply, render them complete, combine them, and yet this imaginary character would be no more to the character of Christ in point of loveliness than one ray is to the sun. "He is fairer than the children of men," infinitely fairer than all the children of God, as much above the angels as he is above mortals, comprising in himself all the graces of time and all the perfections of eternity. "He is the chief among ten thousand ; yea, he is altogether lovely." As every ray of light

in the natural world may be traced up in converging rays to the sun, so every trait of moral loveliness found in good men and angels is but a feeble ray from him, the sun of the moral universe. Nay more, creation draws all her beauties from him; and can we suppose that he has imparted to nature more beauty than he possesses? When our eyes rove over the charming scenes of creation, when we look at the beauties of the heavenly orbs, when we look at the rainbow and the lovely sunset, we may well exclaim with Milton, "How wondrous fair! Thyself how lovely then."

"Nor earth, nor suns, nor seas, nor stars,  
Nor heaven, his full resemblance bears;  
His beauties we can never trace  
Till we behold him face to face."

In the royal gallery at Dresden there is a painting of the Divine Child by Raphael, that is more admired for its beauty than any other like production. Said one, "I could spend an hour of every day in the year in gazing on that assemblage of human, angelic, and divine ideals." There was a tourist, who was so charmed by this picture, that day by day, for two months, he stood before the wonderful conception, spell-bound, occasionally weeping with delight as some new beauty would

appear ; and when his last day had arrived, and his luggage was packed, and his horses were ready for the road, he ran back and took a parting gaze.

So, four inspired men have sketched from life the original of that picture. In that case it is Jesus on canvas. In the four Gospels the living, acting, loving Jesus appears. Read his divinely-written history. Study his likeness as sketched by a divine hand : survey his features. The very best saints that have lived on earth had their defects.

“Defects through nature’s best productions run ;  
The saints have spots, and spots are in the sun.”

But he was *altogether lovely* ; all lights and no shades ; all excellencies and no defects ; all beauties and no blemishes. He never spoke an unkind word, never did an injury, never uttered an untruth, never practised a deception, never lost an opportunity of doing good, was never selfish, never repulsive. Jesus of Nazareth, who can portray his charms ! What snow-white purity amid deep corruptions ! What calmness, while the storms of furious passions raged in those around him ! What meekness amid the most provoking wrongs ! What persevering benevolence against the greatest hostility from earth and hell ! What undying friendship for his fickle, half-hearted disciples ! What

compassion for the guilty and wretched! What condescension and humility, while he was King of kings and Lord of lords! What naturalness! What simplicity! What affecting ease and gracefulness! Oh, he was enough to charm all the angels! The more we love him, the more lovely we become to others, and the more lovely he will become to us. We soon exhaust the most excellent characters of earth. But in the character of our Redeemer there are depths, heights, lengths, and breadths of loveliness that we can never exhaust through time or eternity. After, in heaven, we shall have seen the King in his beauty as many millions of years as there are grains of dust in our globe, there will still be in him an infinitude of undeveloped beauties to transport our expanding souls.

But our Redeemer is as *loving* as he is lovely. There is in him not only a fulness of loveliness to win our love of complacency, but a fulness of lovingness to win our love of gratitude. Such is his personal perfection and attractiveness, that had he never cherished a kind thought nor done a kind deed for us, we would be under the strongest obligation to love him; but how is that obligation enhanced in view of what he *has* done for us, is *now* doing for us, and *will* do for us!

“Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.” Observe the proof of his love. He gave not his exertions, not his influence, not his time and perfections, but himself, his whole divine self, without reserve. To what did he deliver up and give himself? To be born in a stable and cradled in a manger; to obscurity and indigence; to infamy and scorn; to pain and anguish; to be betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, and forsaken by all his disciples. To what did he give himself? To Caia-phas, who insulted him; to Herod, who set him at naught; to Pilate, who condemned him, and to the Romans, who crucified him. In sum, he gave himself to die the shameful, painful death of the cross. Were there ever such proofs of love in any other cause by any other being as these? Let all the archives of antiquity be explored, let the historic page be searched, bring all the generous sacrifices of Greece and Rome, and what are they to the amazing love of Calvary? The love he then and there displayed for us guilty, graceless, hell-deserving sinners, passes the love of women, passes the love of angels, passes tongue to tell, figures to illustrate, fancy to imagine, thought to measure, or eternity itself to praise. His incarnation was the embodiment of his love; his sermons were the precepts of

his love ; his miracles were the deeds of his love ; his tears were the dewdrops of his love ; his death was the agony of his love, and his resurrection was the triumph of his love ; his intercession in heaven is the pleading of his love ; the Holy Spirit is the agent of his love ; the Bible is the record of his love ; the Gospel is the offer of his love ; the church is the depository of his love, and our conversion is the conquest and realization of his love. Glorious Saviour ! In being thus lovely and loving, in being thus attractive in his person and self-denyingly loving to lost man, more of his glory is seen than in all his works and words besides. What must we think of the taste and temper of those who can disesteem such a Saviour ? What a compound of stupidity and depravity is the wretched soul that can be indifferent to such personal charms and to such redeeming kindness ?



## CHAPTER IX.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST APPEARS IN HIS FULNESS OF JOY TO RENDER US HAPPY.

It was the opinion of Robert Hall that when the Scriptures call Jehovah the blessed God, they mean he is the happy God. He is clearly revealed as the only great fountain of blessedness. Said Ezra to the afflicted Jews, "Neither be ye sorry ; for the joy of the Lord is your strength." Said David, "In thy presence is fulness of joy ; and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Jesus said, "My peace I give unto you." And as the final Judge he will say at the last day, "Well done, good and faithful servant ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." One of the expressive titles which the ancient Hebrews gave to God was SHADAH, which signified "the pourer or shedder forth of blessings." It seemed to represent him as the great Reservoir on the top of the universe, pouring out streams of blessedness to all worlds. Angels are not happy, and men are not happy, unless they share in the happiness of Him who is God over all,

blessed for ever. With him is the fountain of life, and there is not a rill, not a drop of bliss in the universe, which that fountain does not yield. They who go elsewhere for happiness wander into boundless deserts, where all is drought and burning winds and vast desolation. As well may an angel expect to find happiness in children's toys, or a philosopher in blowing bubbles, as for man's great soul to expect to find an adequate bliss anywhere out of God. But in God there is everything to satisfy and transport the immortal mind. The joy of the soul, the same that fills the eternal mind, is the only joy that meets the desires and exigences of the immortal soul. The blessedness that Jesus Christ has and imparts to his disciples is permanent, strengthening, ennobling, and satisfying. It makes the soul erect, resolute, persevering, cheerful, and strong. The peace that Jesus has and gives is independent of the changes of time, unaffected by the diseases of the body, uninjured by death, and untouched by the fires of the last day.

See how he glorifies himself, and renders strongly happy his people by giving them his joy as they need and can receive it. What dresses the face of the young convert with such radiant smiles? Why is all within him peace, and all before him trans-

port? Because, when he was forgiven, Christ let into his soul a rill of his joy. What makes that bedridden, suffering saint, when all creature-comforts are dried up, so serene, calm, and bright? It is the joy of the Lord. What is it that lifts the dying saint above the fear of death, softens the dying-bed, and strews it all over with the roses of paradise? It is the joy of Christ. And what is it that rolls a tide of rapture all over the world of glory, that makes heaven heaven? It is because the saints above have entered more fully into the joy of the Lord, and the joy of the Lord has entered more fully into them, than their capacities would permit them to receive while on earth. Indeed, there is not a good man on earth or in heaven that does not derive all his true joys from Christ. Millions of His saints in all parts of the earth are constantly asking and receiving from Him joys that cheer and strengthen them in the house of their pilgrimage. Some of them are poor, some of them sick, some of them tempted, some of them dying; yet to each and to all he imparts a joy that impels to duty, sustains in affliction, and cheers in toil. And while he is thus imparting true happiness to the millions of his redeemed on earth, he is pouring a flood of glory and felicity into the untold millions

of his servants in heaven, filling them to overflowing with the fulness of his joy.

If there is such an inexhaustible fulness of joy in Christ, and he is delighted and glorified in imparting his joy to his people, then it follows that it is not only our privilege, but our duty to be happy in Christ. Christianity, rightly understood, not only authorizes and allows, but commands us to be happy. And it is greatly important that we more clearly understand and fully verify this feature of our Saviour's character. The world's conversion has been greatly hindered from our not making a fuller test of Christ's efficiency and sufficiency to justify and sanctify us; and it may be well questioned whether the cause of Christ has not been greatly retarded from our not having received a greater measure of his joy. The command of God is, "Rejoice in the Lord alway," and no man can tell how many immortal souls have gone into an undone eternity in consequence of its not having been fulfilled by the people of Christ. The salvation of the world lingers from the want of holy joy among the disciples of Christ. A great many professed Christians have practically declared their religion to be a gloomy thing by going to the world itself for pleasure. All men seek happiness, and

when they behold the followers of Christ appearing less happy in serving the Lord than they did in sin, they are confirmed in the prejudice that religion is a mopish, melancholy thing, and thereby many are kept from embracing it. The glory of Christ, then, in the triumph of his gospel, demands that every friend of Christ should be not only a conscientious, devout, and liberal, but a happy Christian. He owes it to the cause of Christ, to himself, to his family, his brethren, and the world of mankind, to live a serene, cheerful, happy life. Perhaps the greatest desideratum, in order to the more rapid conversion of the world to Christ, is that every Christian should be a specimen of the happiness Christianity is adapted to impart. When all who name the name of Christ shall be examples and reflectors of the joy of Christ, then Christianity will spread with primitive speed.

But is it practicable to be always joyful? Says one, "I would, but cannot be happy." But if God makes it your duty to be joyful always, under all circumstances, then the requirement is reasonable and the fulfilment practicable. It is admitted that the Christian cannot be happy without good cause for being so. But he has good cause to be joyful. God does not require his people to rejoice without

affording them an adequate object to render them supremely and perpetually joyful. What is it he requires us to rejoice in? In the world, its profits, its honors, its pleasures, its friendships? Not in these. His command is, "Rejoice *in the Lord Jesus.*" And is he not an adequate object to rejoice in? Is he not enough in himself? Has he not done enough for you and said enough to you to induce you, as your most reasonable, every-day practice, to be joyful? All Christians have some causes for sadness, but they have in Christ far greater causes for gladness. This is the reason why they should rejoice even in their sorrows; for however great and multiplied their causes for sorrow, their causes for joy far transcend those for sorrow. The most reduced, afflicted saint that Christ has on earth has in his Saviour ten thousand stronger grounds for being happy than he has to be unhappy. It is not so with the rejecter of Christ. He, amid the best surroundings of earth, has far more reasons for being unhappy than he has to be happy. But when the Christian is most reduced, he has in his Saviour far more and better blessings than he has lost.

The point of our reasoning is this. If we have a Saviour who has in himself such resources of bless-

edness, and if he is infinitely able and willing to impart all needed supplies of that blessedness to us, and if by our want of this joy we become gloomy, and thereby misrepresent his religion, repel from it the ungodly, and dishonor his name, then is not unhappiness in us a sin, and is not joyfulness in Christ our bounden duty? Do, then, Christian brother, live up to your duty, and appreciate your precious privilege in this regard. Take down your harp from the willows and begin the raptured song. As you walk on to the grave, let all the country around be charmed and won by your sacred melody; and let your songs of gladness die away from mortal ears only to burst in new and louder tones on the ear of heaven. In this way Christ will be glorified in you more than he is by all that shines above and blooms beneath. In your joyfulness Christ's joy will be more fully realized and his glory more fully displayed.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST IS SEEN IN HIS FULNESS OF CONSOLATION TO SUPPORT HIS PEOPLE IN THEIR AFFLICTIONS.

No strength however great, no plans however wise, no talents however brilliant, no wealth however unbounded, no schemes of pleasure however skilfully planned, can turn away from us losses, crosses, disappointments, and death. Make the very best of life, it is a weary pilgrimage, burdened with many woes. How many, how complicated, and how crushing are the afflictions of the righteous. And hence one of our great wants is some balm of life, some alleviation of care, something that shall bind up the broken-hearted and pour consolation into heavy hearts. Men everywhere seek a comforter and alleviator of care and sorrow, and if there be none, then is life a wretched, weary, gloomy journey.

But there are in the Lord Jesus ample resources to meet this emergency. He is "the God of all comfort." He says to the tried and sorrowing, "I, even I, am he that comforteth thee." Hear other



of his consoling words to the afflicted: "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." "These things have I spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Now does our Redeemer fulfil and verify these consoling promises in the experience of his afflicted saints? The experience of the saints in all ages bears testimony to the unfailing faithfulness with which the omnipotent, omniscient Jehovah fulfils his promises to all who put their trust in him. Not one afflicted believer in any land or age has ever, in the dark hour of sorrow and calamity, gone to his Saviour for supporting grace and been disappointed. It is true, many through unbelief have at times been ready to call his faithfulness and sustaining grace in question—"The Lord hath forsaken, and my Lord hath forgotten"—yet in no instance have these gloomy apprehensions ever been ultimately realized, but in every case the all-faithful Redeemer has timely appeared for their relief, and convinced them that their gloomy fears were as groundless as they were unkind to him. Ask the great army of the tried and suffering who are now on their way to heaven if Christ ever failed to grant

them sustaining grace in time of need, and they will all tell you that their apprehensions were groundless—that in every case their Redeemer is a very present help in trouble. Ask the great host who have gone up to heaven through great tribulation if the Redeemer ever refused to aid them to endure sufferings with patience and losses with resignation, and No, no, no! would resound from all their shining ranks.

As no case of guilt or depravity has ever transcended the pardoning and regenerating power of our Saviour, so no instance of affliction has ever occurred among his saints beyond his comforting power. See how the consolations of Christ are imparted to his people while under the extremest calamities of life. When were the three Hebrew children visited by the heavenly guest, but when they were walking in the furnace for their adherence to the truth? When did Paul and Silas ever sing so rapturously as when they lay bound and mangled in the inner prison of Philippi? The impartation of Christ's consolations is always proportional to the exigencies of our condition. He does not impart solace to-day for to-morrow's trials. He always deals with us according to our present necessities. When he sees we need strength, he gives

it ; wisdom, he gives it ; pardon, he gives it ; affliction, he sends it. So, when we need solace, he grants it. There is no promise more clearly verified by the experience of the Christian than, "As thy days so shall thy strength be." The martyrs greatly needed the comforts of Christ, and his sustaining grace was so signally imparted to them, that the violence of the fiercest flames was quenched, and the very fires were to them beds of roses. When we are well and active, we do not so much need the consolations of the gospel. But when we are bedridden and racked with bodily pains, we need Christ's solacing grace ; and how wonderfully does he vouchsafe it to such ! And how such glorify Christ in the fires ! What a testimony do they bear to the sustaining power of his grace, when they show by their patience and cheerfulness that Christ can sustain them when earthly supports give way. When we turn away from such we are constrained to say, "We have heard of the religion of Christ, but we have now seen it manifested, to his own glory."

But above all other emergencies of this life, death is the one in which we most need the supporting presence of our Redeemer. Of all the calamities of earth, death is the strongest and most

terrible. And how utterly inadequate are all human supports in this new, inevitable, mysterious affliction! A grateful family may minister around us with affectionate tenderness. Well-provided attendants may anticipate every bodily want. Wealth in abundance may be present to alleviate pain and dignify the condition of the dying. Sweet sympathy may fan the fainting spirit. These reach not the wants of the dying. But just here how gloriously Christ cheers and sustains his dying disciples. When earthly foundations crack, tremble, and give way by the inrush of the black waters of death, the believer finds beneath his feet the Rock of Ages. While his hand is warm from the last earthly pressure, Jesus takes it and leads him forward with certain and inspiring confidence. Just when the accents of human affection die away upon his ear, he hears the voice of his great Redeemer saying, "Fear not, I am with thee." When his soul is unclothed from its mortal covering, he finds the beautiful garment of Christ's righteousness, which covers his nakedness and deformities, and clad in which he can mount up from his bed of death the shining path to glory and to God. None but the recording angel can tell how many saints Christ has enabled to die radiantly, victoriously, and use-

fully. Said one to whom he had given living and then dying grace, "Is this dying? Is this the enemy that has so long dismayed me, now appearing so harmless and even pleasant?"

If, then, our Redeemer can lighten our heaviest burdens, irradiate our darkest scenes, soothe our most corroding anxieties, dry our most sorrowful tears, and hush our bitterest griefs; if he can by his presence cheer the broken-hearted and bring tears of gladness into eyes swollen with grief; if his consolations can produce and maintain serenity under evils which drive worldlings to madness; if Christ can, by his love and grace, so reconcile his sufferers to their crosses as to send songs of praises from lips quivering with agony—then is he not infinitely worthy of the strongest confidence, the supremest love, and the most devoted service of every son and daughter of Adam?

## CHAPTER XI.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST IS SEEN IN HIS FULNESS OF POWER, TO DELIVER AND PROTECT US.

IN the way of our being finally saved, there are very great and, to the eye of human reason, insurmountable difficulties. To reach the heavenly world we must not only overcome the world with its frowns and blandishments, and the flesh with its appetites and lusts, but legions of fallen angels whose perseverance, skill, and power to tempt and ruin are greater than we can tell. So that unless our Redeemer be literally omnipotent he cannot meet all the emergencies of our case. The mightiest angel is inadequate to vanquish our foes. But one of the glories of our Saviour is that he has all power given unto him, in heaven and earth. Not only has he omniscience for the glance of his eye, omnipresence for the coëxtension of his existence, eternity for the term of his being, and immensity for his empire, but omnipotence for the energy of his will; and this he has not merely as absolute God, but as the Mediator. The once poor, obscure, Galilean mechanic is exalted to the throne of the

universe, and is invested with complete and sovereign power, over all matter, minds, and events. Though he was once crucified in weakness, he is the mighty God, with an empire extending upwards as high as the flight of the highest angel, downwards as deep as the bottomless abyss, and outwards as far as the outskirts of creation, whither no created being ever sent a solitary thought. There is nothing "too hard" for our Saviour. He can do all his pleasure, in heaven, earth, and hell. He rules and renders subservient to his purposes towards his people, all material, animal, human, and angelic agents. Beings rational and irrational, animate and inanimate ; the heavens above, and the earth below, the obedience of the good, and the disobedience of the bad ; fallen and unfallen angels ; all the saved and all the damned spirits ; in a word, every agent from the archangel down to the atom, are the ministers of his will. How astonishing are his possessions, dominion, and power ! He is Lord both of the dead and living. The great empire of the grave, as well as all that lives and acts, is completely subject to his sovereign will. A world seems a great thing to us ; but what is our earth, to the millions of suns, around which roll unnumbered worlds ? By him all these worlds were created

and are upheld. At his bidding suns lighted up their fires, and systems rolled to fulfil his pleasure. All the dispensations of Providence, however mysterious and desolating in their sweep, carry out his designs. The mighty host of angels obey him. To carry into effect his mandates is their highest honor. He has complete empire over devils. From his throne high and lifted up he can descry and frustrate all their wiles, and say to them, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther." And in the realm of mind, over the will, thoughts, and affections, his power is as complete as it is over matter and events.

There is then no difficulty or enemy in the way of our salvation, that he cannot, with infinite ease, remove and overcome. Are you dead in trespasses and sins? He that called Lazarus from the sepulchre can quicken you into life. Are you fast bound in the snares of Satan? He that could expel seven devils from one and a legion from another can deliver you. Are you blind to spiritual glories? He who gave sight to the blind men of Jericho can make you see. Have furious storms of trouble overtaken you? He who by a word hushed into a calm the Galilean sea can give you repose, *viz.*, he will enable you to bear your afflictions, or he



will remove them. Do you complain of a heart of stone? He, who by a look melted and restored a fallen Peter and subdued a Saul of Tarsus, can soften you. Were all spiritual enemies at once to assail you, you can take courage in the fact that greater is He that is for you than are they that are against you. True, your great enemy is mighty, but your Saviour is Almighty. True, you are nothing to your enemies, but it is also true that your enemies are nothing to your divine Friend and Keeper. Not only is our Saviour infinitely greater in strength than all our enemies combined, but he is greater in resources, greater in his agency, greater in his residence, greater in his subjects, and greater in his principles. When we remember who our Redeemer is, and what he has done for us, when we call to mind that his nature is love, his will is power, his thoughts are wisdom, his resources are all-sufficiency, his empire is the universe, and his duration eternity, and recollect that he has bound himself by a promise and covenant never to leave nor forsake us and that all things shall work together for our good, may we not triumphantly say, "If Christ is for us who can be against us? With such a Saviour whom or what need we fear?" The best Christian on earth might never overcome an-

other sin, never gain another triumph over the world, never demolish another idol, never escape another snare of Satan. But with Christ strengthening us we can meet the combined assaults of earth and hell, and be more than conquerors. In a word, with such an almighty Saviour for our atoner, regenerator, sanctifier, leader, and intercessor, we can perform all of life's duties, bear all of life's trials, resist all of life's temptations, overcome all of life's enemies ; triumphantly meet life's close, and have ministered unto us an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom. Glorious is this Saviour, and ineffably safe and happy are all they who love and obey him !

## CHAPTER XII.

IN JESUS CHRIST THERE IS A FULNESS OF WISDOM TO MANAGE IN THE BEST WAY THE AFFAIRS OF OUR SOULS.

Though our Saviour was an obscure Jew, a young man, and a working carpenter, yet he was the greatest among the great, and the wisest among the wise. During the last eighteen hundred years the world has made great advances in science, arts, and civilization, but nothing has been added to the information that the Man of Nazareth revealed concerning God, the soul, immortality, and man's duty to God, himself, and others. All we certainly know on these great moral and religious questions, the son of Mary has told us. But to say of him, as Goethe and Renan said, that Jesus was the greatest of earth's reformers and philosophers, is only to say an infinitesimal part of the truth concerning him. His knowledge is as limitless as his power, his understanding is infinite ; he knows the end from the beginning ; he knows all things in their origin, connections, tendencies, and consequences. Every-

thing that has occurred in the universe, everything that is now taking place, and everything that will take place, is mapped out before his omniscient eye in perfect transparency. At a single glance, he looks through immensity and eternity, and takes in at one view all beings and events. He knows what will take place and what his people will need a thousand years to come. Nothing can surprise, or nonplus, or disappoint him. He knows how to make the most malicious wiles of hell redound to his people's greatest good, and his greatest glory. No part of our salvation can fail from any mistake on the part of our Redeemer. Never from eternity has he altered or amended any of his plans. He has never done anything for his people collectively or individually that could have been better done. Often, while he is training us for usefulness and for heaven, we are perplexed and gloomily conclude in our haste that all these things are against our own good and our Master's honor. But this is our infirmity. We forget that providences that are trying and contradictory to us, are really most for our good and his glory. We ask him for bright lights. He in his wisdom and love sees it best for us to read our prayers backward and give us dark shadows. We desire to be put upward and

forward, both temporally and spiritually. But he in his wisdom sees we can only be put forward and upward spiritually, by being put backward and downward temporally; hence the afflictions he sends on his people. Let us then always trust him, even when we cannot trace him; remembering that, were it consistent with his glory and our holiness, he would give us all light and no shadows, all sweets and no bitters; and no doubt at the last day, when the schemes of his redemption and providence shall be finished, we shall adoringly see that the very things in this life that we most sought would have been our ruin, had we been permitted to obtain them, and the very things we most tried to shun were the very things most essential and beneficial to us as disciples of Christ. What abundant reasons have we to rejoice in the government of such a God and Saviour! What could we do without such an infinitely kind, powerful, and wise Saviour, who knows infinitely better how to plan for us than we do for ourselves. Better that we had never been born than not to have him reign over us, both in providence and in grace. Let us then gather up everything dear to us for both worlds and commit them all into the hands that bled for us on Calvary. We cannot place too much confidence in him. By

his atoning death and converting and sustaining grace, by his intercession for us before his Father's throne, and by his many providential interpositions in our behalf, he has attested and supported his claim to our unwavering faith and supreme love.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST WILL APPEAR IN HIS BEING INVESTED WITH THE AUTHORITY, POWER, AND WISDOM TO JUDGE THE WORLD, IN THE FINAL SALVATION OF HIS FRIENDS, AND IN THE ETERNAL DESTRUCTION OF HIS ENEMIES.

He must be the world's Judge, as well as its Atoner, Sanctifier, Model, Leader, and Intercessor, or he would not be a complete and infinitely glorious Saviour. The great end of human redemption is the glory of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And its history has already revealed much of that glory. In the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Prophetical dispensations there were symbolic, sacrificial, and typical displays of Christ's glory. His glory was more remarkably displayed in his incarnation and death. Never before had Divine glory shone so brightly as on Mount Calvary. There was a glory that preceded his incarnation and death; there was a glory that accompanied his sufferings, and there was a greater glory that followed his sufferings. In the darkening of the sun, the rending of the rocks, the opening of the graves,

and in the salvation of the dying thief and the centurion, we behold the yet unequalled display of that glory which accompanied the sufferings of Christ. But in his resurrection and ascension, in his Spirit's descending and converting three thousand prejudiced Jews on the day of Pentecost, in the triumphant diffusion of his gospel over the whole Roman empire within a few years after his death, and in the untold millions that that gospel has saved from sin and Satan since, we behold greater and more convincing displays of his glory than at first issued from the cross.

But neither Calvary nor the progress of the gospel since adequately display the honor of Christ. Very much of our Redeemer's glory is yet concealed from men and angels. Millions of our race do not know that such a being as Christ exists. And even in those countries where he is professedly known, what multitudes oppose and dishonor him! And more wonderful still, among those who wear his name, how many are there who tarnish his glory by denying his divinity! Others cast him down from his excellency by renouncing his atonement and ridiculing the operations of his Spirit. And among his real friends, how many are there who, by their inconsistencies of temper and conduct, hin-



der his glory by lowering him in the esteem of his enemies! Now that the honor of the Redeemer should thus be concealed and lessened and cast into the dust is a matter of humiliation and distress to every true believer. It is the deepest desire of every true Christian that his Saviour may be more fully and universally honored; and all such are cheered by the thought that at the day of his second coming he will be completely and universally glorified. He will then come in power and great glory. He will then be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe. His grandeur will then be seen and acknowledged by all the inhabitants of heaven, earth, and hell. Far unlike his first coming will be his second. He was then humbled, suffering, persecuted, dying, nailed to the cross, and buried in the grave; much of his glory was veiled. At his second coming he will descend from heaven with the glory of his Father and in the full brilliancy of that glory which he had with the Father before the world was. No more the babe of Bethlehem; no more a prisoner before a human judge; no more an expiring victim on the cross; no more a lifeless corpse in the sepulchre; no more disbelieved, opposed, and dishonored; no more unknown, vilified, and misrepresented. "Behold, he

cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him ; and they also which pierced him ; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Fix your eye on that point in the ethereal heavens where the gradually lessening form of our Saviour disappeared from the gaze of his disciples when he ascended to heaven. At that point see an uncommon and undefined brightness just beginning to appear. It catches the eye of the careless. All over the earth groups are formed, wondering what that strange light means. While they gaze, conjecture gives place to appalling certainty. The light begins to enlarge and approach the earth. The sun begins to pale before a brightness superior to his own. Meanwhile the light becomes a great dazzling cloud, which comes rushing down as on the wings of a whirlwind. It pauses and suddenly discloses a great white throne, on which sits, in all the glories of the Godhead, the man Christ Jesus. Before his judgment-seat all the inhabitants of heaven, earth, and hell shall be gathered. The universe elsewhere will be deserted, and all its fallen and unfallen inhabitants will stand before the great white throne. The books will be opened. Every eye will be intently fixed on the Judge. Upon what a large scale will Christ then be glorified !

1. In that supreme day *he will glorify his justice in the conviction, overthrow, and punishment of his enemies.* Already he has given displays of his wrath in the punishment of his foes: in sending on the antediluvians a baptism of vengeance; in burning up the degenerate cities of the plain, and leaving in their place a sea of death; in earthquakes, famines, wars, and pestilences. But all these are but admonitory preintimations of the displays of his justice that will be witnessed on that day. There have been other days of his wrath. That will be the great day of his wrath. All the other inflictions of his wrath have been partial in their degree and in the number punished. But on that day his wrath will fall to the uttermost on all his enemies. There will not be a foe of his among fallen men or fallen angels that will not be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. Never after that day will he have in any world an unconvinced, unchained, unpunished enemy. He will show his enemies that their ruin was derived from themselves, and that their sins are just as evil and odious as he had declared them to be in the Scriptures, and that they are equitably punished everlastingly in perdition. When the crimson aggra-

vation of the sinner's guilt shall be laid open in the clear light of eternity, so just and necessary will it appear to all that he ought to go away into everlasting punishment, that the universe will say Amen to his doom; and never after the disclosures of that occasion will any doomed soul whisper a complaint that he has been punished more severely than his sins deserved.

2. *On that day Christ will glorify his omniscience.* To make no mistake in fixing the destinies of men and angels, he must bring every work into judgment and every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil. According to the long-published principles on which the last great assize is to be conducted, not a single sinner can be absent nor a single sin overlooked. Every saint, of all lands and ages, with every wish, desire, purpose, word, and deed of every saint, on the one hand, and every sinner of Adam's race, with every omitted kindness, evil thought, unchaste desire, idle and profane word and deed of darkness of every sinner, on the other, must be brought into the open court, or the assembled universe would be justified in protesting against the proceedings. But how can the man Christ Jesus bring every sinner and every sin into trial, unless from the beginning he has searched

the hearts and tried the motives of the children of men? However interlocked and confederated sinners and sins may be with each other, he will so know each and all in their isolated responsibility, that he will as accurately and adequately judge and punish each as if he and each were the only twain in the universe. Though amid an assembled universe, each one will have the guilt and number of his sins so clearly and appallingly revealed to him, that he will be engrossingly insulated from all others. In anticipation of the disclosures of the great audit, the Judge has said, "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." How literally will he verify this prediction at his judgment-seat!

Elsewhere he says, "I will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart," when I come. Here he says he will set our sins in order before our eyes. When the books are opened, and the great crowd shall be hushed into deepest silence, and every being shall be bending forward to hear his impending doom, then the Judge will, by a new miracle of his omniscience and power, cause all the sins of each to

rise up and come trooping around him. Each one will behold the vast picture of his sins, drawn in blackness, with no luminous strokes to relieve his distressed eye. Were the Judge to lay open now the secret sins of the wicked, as he will at that day, they would be banished from society; nay, they would fly from it themselves, overwhelmed with shame and confusion. When the sins of each are disclosed amid assembled worlds, all holy beings will be aghast, and exclaim, "Away with such to their kindred spirits in the abyss!" To the omniscient Judge alone the disclosure will not be amazing. Oh, never before will there have been such a glorious display of the omniscience of Christ.

3. *On that day he will glorify his power in bringing his friends and enemies to judgment, and in the final accomplishment of his purposes in regard to them.* Already we have had glorious displays of the power of our Redeemer in curing diseases, opening blind eyes, casting out devils, calming the seas, raising the dead; and in raising himself from death he appeared in a splendor and majesty in which as Mediator he had never been seen before. But these are inconspicuous exhibitions of power in comparison with those he will display at the last judgment. When that day comes, an overwhelm-

ing majority of our race will be among the dead. The bodies of hundreds of generations will have commingled with their mother earth, been scattered by the winds, burned by the fires, washed by the waters, and transmuted into the trees and into the flesh of other animals. Can Omnipotence, guided by infinite wisdom itself, reconstruct and reproduce alive the bodies of the buried generations that have been thus scattered to the four winds? This were the sublimest prodigy of the infinite God. There is no other marvel in his dealings with our race that equals it; and yet this is the work with which the man Christ Jesus will begin the last great assize. He greatly amazed the Jews once by telling them that the spiritually dead would hear his voice and be raised up to spiritual life. They could not understand how the word of Christ could possess such regenerating power. Christ said to them, "Marvel not at this;" as though he had said, "You are staggered and deem it incredible that I can speak into moral life souls that are dead in sin. But I have a yet more wonderful thing to tell you, which I shall hereafter do, which requires far greater power. Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear my voice, and shall come forth." Grasp, if you

can, the great fact: while the myriads upon myriads shall be sleeping in death, the trumpet of God shall sound, and the voice of the Son of God shall pierce, with irresistible life-begetting, life-compelling force, every grave, and in an instant every member and dust of every body will seek its kindred member and dust, and every dead member of Adam's countless family will stand up, an interminable living throng, ready to press forward to the judgment-seat. And what will add to this marvel of divine marvels, it will be effected *instantaneously*. Says Paul, "In a *moment*." And that term not sufficiently expressing the quickness of the work, he adds, "In the *twinkling* of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." At one instant the bodies of the buried generations are dispersed to the four quarters of the earth, floating in waters, waving in the trees, and forming parts of other bodies of men and beasts; and their resurrection is, to human reason, the greatest of all impossibilities. The next instant they have heard the voice of the Son of God, have been disentangled, dust has found its kindred dust, bone its fellow-bone, and every body is raised, and all are reconstructed and gathered into an innumerable host, ready for the last great audit. And



all this is effected by the same voice that said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest;" and that on the cross said, "It is finished." Wonderful Saviour, who need fear to commit his all into thy hands till that day? Nor will this be the only display of his power. The saints who are alive, on the morning of the judgment, will, in an instant, by the same power, have their bodies of flesh and blood made incorruptible, immortal, spiritual, and fashioned like unto his own body after he arose. At his bidding all these saints and sinners, as an immense cloud, will rise up through the air—as they approach the tribunal, his friends, with hallelujahs, going to the right hand, and his enemies, with groans, to the left.

His power will also be signally displayed and glorified in the arraignment and doom of the devils. When they fell, he prepared a hell for them, and has kept them partially chained in that world of darkness. To the judgment of the great day these devils are looking with dread as the time of their complete punishment and overthrow. Hence when Jesus was about casting a legion of them out of a Gadarene, they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou

come hither to torment us *before the time?*" The same power that has been reserving them in chains under darkness, will on that great day tear off the covering of hell and cause them to ascend, to meet before assembled worlds the rebuke and doom they have so long merited. The most awful and convincing evidence will then be furnished, that Christ has supreme control over men, angels, death, and hell. Men and devils resist him now, but none will then be able to stay his hand, or dare to say unto him, "What doest thou?" Heaven, at his command, will open all its infinite enjoyments to his disciples; and the doors of hell, at his bidding, will close in on all his enemies. To all who love him, his smile will be heaven, and to all who hate him, his frown will be hell. From his face the heavens and the earth will flee away; and at his word a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, will arise in their stead.

4. *At the judgment day he will glorify his holiness.* By his word and by his judgment, and especially by his atoning cross and renewing Spirit, he has done much to arrest the ravages of sin, and to extirpate it from man and from the earth; still Satan and sin, to a great extent, have the world for their empire and mankind for their prey. Nor do we know

that their sway will be entirely broken, by the millennial reign. That will consist in the general prevalence of Christianity. Now the glory of God demands that the great rebellion that commenced in heaven, when the angels kept not their first estate, and on earth, when our first parents fell, should be entirely put down; that all who have taken sides with Satan against him, should be vanquished, either by his grace or by his judicial power. In one of these ways Jesus will conquer all his enemies. He has declared that every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father; and as certainly as he is God, his every enemy must thus bow and confess—voluntarily and believingly, or involuntarily and penally. The only option wicked men have is in which way they will submit. All whom the judgment-day finds unsubdued in the former, will be vanquished in the latter way. All on the right hand of the Judge will be they who were subdued by grace; all on the left will be they who remained Christ's enemies; and they will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. All classes of sinners and all grades of sins will on that day be so exposed, abashed, condemned, and punished, as for

ever to have their God-dishonoring career ended. Man will then in wrath be transferred from his place of sinning to the abode of penal suffering; and the earth which he had polluted will be purified by the judgment fires. After the great audit the entire universe, hell excepted, will be freed from sin. Earth, where the great rebellion occurred, having been purified by a deluge of fire, will give place to new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. In hell, all unredeemed men and fallen angels will be confined for ever, a fearful cautionary monument of the evil of sinning against God.

One class of sinners will meet, from the Judge, a more intolerable doom than any others. It will be the gospel-rejecters. Whoever may hope for an audience on the day of visitation, they cannot expect it. Were any allowed to be absent, certainly they would not be. Were a day of judgment appointed for no other class, the judgment-throne would be erected and the books opened for them. Whoever may hope to come off with a lighter doom, rejecters of Christ cannot expect it. Their sin will throw all others into the shade. The most ordinary proceedings of that day will be invested with a greater solemnity, than the universe has

ever before beheld. But when the rejecter of Christ shall be arraigned, when all that Christ vainly did to save him shall be revealed, the attention of the universe will become breathless and intense; and when his doom is pronounced\* the voice of the Judge will take a deeper tone, and speak with a more awful emphasis, as he utters the malediction, "Depart from me, I never knew you."

Rejecters of Christ will meet a deeper perdition than the heathen or the devils. Christ did not die for the devils, and was never rejected by the heathen. And in this deepest perdition of the ungodly, Christ's holiness and justice will be glorified. In the very misery of the second death, the universe will read the hatefulness of sin and God's aversion to it.

5. At the last day *Jesus will be glorified in the consummation of his kindness to his disciples*. His redeeming favors are bestowed in distinct and successive stages—each stage better than the preceding—by which his people are carried from blessing to blessing, till they reach the very summit of salvation. The beginning of the series of Christ's benefits is *the forgiveness of sin*. That removes the law's penalty, the sting of death, the wrath of God, and the damnation of hell, changes our state and

\* Dr. Harris.

nature, puts in our possession a right and title to heaven. Then our relations to the universe are changed, we draw the first breath of a new life, and aim at heaven. Death comes and our Redeemer vouchsafes to us a far greater measure of his redeeming goodness. If we are Christ's then death is ours; ours not to escape, but ours to vanquish, and to usher us into the ever-blooming paradise of God.

None but believers who have died can tell how much we gain by dying. It is one low moan, and then eternal song. It is one brief, sharp conflict, and then we have for ever vanquished sin, Satan, self, death, and hell, and with the quickness of thought are with Christ, where our every pain is eased, our every desire fulfilled, and our every hope realized. The Christian's death brings glory to Christ and heaven to himself. But the introduction of the soul into Paradise completes neither the salvation of the believer nor the glory of Christ. So long as the bodies of the saints are under the dominion of death, Christ's work is incomplete, and his honor in our salvation not fully displayed. Accordingly on the morning of the last judgment "The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of

God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first." This Scripture has been supposed to allude to the trumpet of Jubilee, that proclaimed the liberation of all prisoners in Israel, at the end of every fifty years. What joyful hopes would be raised in the captives, as the forty-ninth year approached its close ! How bright their countenances when the sun of the last day set ! When just as the sun of the first day of the fiftieth year arose, ten thousand trumpets blew through every quarter of the land, and every prison door was opened and every captive was freed from debt, and set at liberty. In some such way, on the morning of the last day, the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, when all heaven, the souls of the redeemed, an innumerable company of angels, each of all the holy intelligences in God's universe, shall unite in one general shout, that shall rend the earth, and proclaim the deliverance of all the dead in Christ ; when every saint of every land and age will spring from the dust of death, radiant with immortality. How will their eyes sparkle with joy and echo back the shouts from heaven, when they behold themselves delivered from the dominion of death, possessed of bodies immortal, spiritual, and glorious. This will be the third stage of that glorious salvation that Jesus effects in his people.

All Christ's other redeeming achievements are small compared with this. This eclipses, in glory, his other exploits. But this is subservient to another and higher stage of redemption; which will be their acquittal at the bar of heaven, amid assembled worlds. When the Judge vanquishes and dooms his enemies, he will do it in the presence of all his friends, and when he absolves, acquits, and rewards his friends, he will do it in the presence of all his enemies. "Before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Not one of his enemies will be on his right hand; not one of his friends will be on the left. "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." What gracious, heaven-revealing, heaven-bestowing words. Then, when the assembled universe shall be hushed into silence and the Judge shall be distributing endless life and endless death, the same voice that on earth said, "Come unto me," will say "Come," and the same hands that were pierced on Calvary, will place on their heads the crown of life. What a bright contrast between those on the right and those on the left hand. To those on the right, it is



*"Come."* To those on the left, *"Depart."* To his friends, "Ye blessed of my Father." To his enemies he will utter the awful malediction, "Depart, ye cursed." One will be the blessed of the Father ; and if God blesses them, how full, efficacious, and irreversible the blessing ! The hatred and imprecations of the universe cannot injure those whom God blesses. Those on the left hand will be cursed of his Father. No language can tell, nor imagination can conceive the terrors of being cursed, at the last day, by the incarnate Judge. When that terrific sentence falls from the lips of the blessed Jesus, the last drop of the soul's bliss will be dried up, the last star of hope blotted out. Those on the right hand will be welcomed to the bosom of infinite love, and into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world ; and when Jesus says to them, Come, every mansion and inhabitant of heaven will echo the invitation, Come. But acquitting, applauding, and crowning his redeemed in the presence of all worlds, does not complete the glory, honor, and blessedness, to which Christ will finally exalt them. The final judgment being ended, wicked men and angels being doomed to their eternal penal abode, the righteous being acquitted, and God's government vindicated before all worlds, the Judge

with all his followers will ascend to the heaven of heavens, where, with all his redeemed, of all ages and nations, fully delivered from the ruins of the fall, soul and body and both reflecting his own image, he will present them before his Father's throne, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, as the crown and reward of his mediatorial work.

Behold the mediatorial work of Christ finished in the complete deliverance of his people from the ruins of the grave, and the deeper ruins of the fall. See a multitude that no man can number in the fulness of perfect joy before the throne of God. Oh how do their knowledge, their purity, their dignity, their bliss, their undying friendship for each other, and their perpetual and eternal safety, glorify, in the estimation of all worlds, Him that loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood.

The discussion of this subject suggests some most important inquiries.

1. When we first look at Christ, and see in him an infinite inexhaustible fulness of spiritual blessings, a fulness of light sufficient to scatter the world's darkness ; of merit to atone for the world's guilt ; of mercy to pardon all sins ; of grace to sanctify all hearts ; of beauty to win our supreme love ; of excellency for our imitation and transformation ;

of joy to make all human beings blessed for ever ; of consolation to support man under all trials and afflictions ; of power to protect from all enemies, and deliver from all difficulties ; of wisdom to manage all man's interests in the best way ; and of authority and power to judge the world—and then turn to mankind and see them utterly devoid of all these blessings, that so redundantly dwell in Christ ; behold them ignorant, guilty, vile, depraved, loving the hateful and hating the lovely, miserable, sorrowful, unable to overcome their foes, and incompetent to take care of themselves—when we thus see the infinite, saving, available fulness of the Redeemer, and the appalling, hopeless emptiness of man, the question arises how may there be formed between the unsaved and the Saviour a channel of communication, up which may go our application, and down which may come supplies from Christ's fulness ? Between the all-sufficient Saviour and the all-needy sinner, there is a wide disseverance. From the one to the other there must be formed a conduit, or no adult sinner can be saved through Christ. In order to our being saved through Christ's sufficiency, it is just as essential that there should exist between him and us a channel of communication, as it is that there should be a Christ. Nor are

we ordinarily the passive recipients of his fulness. Those whom he saves thus are exceptional. His rule is to save through a well-understood means on our part. What is it? It is not the sacraments. They are commemorative and sanctifying, and not regenerative. Nor is the channel in question prayer. That is an application through the previously-formed channel. It is not natural goodness. Thousands possess that who are utterly without God and Christ in the world. It is not strictly penitence. That is the change of the soul's view of sacred things, when it has commenced receiving of Christ's sufficiency. It is not the church. We are received into the church through Christ, and do not receive Christ by becoming members of his church. It is not the ministry. No pope, priest, prelate or pastor, can come in between Christ and the sinner, and be the medium of grace to his soul. What then is the heaven-appointed channel? It is a *personal, living, leaning, loving faith*. It is not feeling and faith, or works, or reformation and faith, but faith only. This is God's plainly revealed appointment. He has ordained and proclaimed that whenever any sinner begins to exercise faith in Christ, he begins that moment to partake of the fulness in Christ; and the degree in which he par-

takes of this fulness will be just in proportion to the strength of his faith. Hence the singular prominence the Bible gives to faith. It is called by the apostle Peter "precious faith," for what can be more precious than that which forms an indissoluble union and free communication between a lost, needy, guilty sinner and the Saviour, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead. He who exercises this faith is saved in his state and nature, and is incalculably rich, though he should possess nothing else; and he who exercises not this faith is miserably poor, though he should possess all the world can give. No matter what a man is and does in other respects that God demands, if he has never made a believing application to Christ, he has no share in this fulness. His mind is unenlightened, his sins are unpardoned, his heart is unsanctified, and the wrath of God abideth on him. According to the repeated and clear teachings of the Scriptures, faith in Christ is the pivot and turning point of one's present and eternal salvation. None are qualified to enter either his earthly or heavenly kingdom, but those to whom he imparts his fulness; and none receive his fulness but those who believe in him.

If then faith in Christ be the very *cardo rerum*, the hinge of salvation, if in the Scriptures the same

blessings that are ascribed to Christ are ascribed to faith in him, then how vitally important that we know what it is to believe in Christ. The Scriptures, to make this vital exercise plain, employ a variety of plain figures. They represent faith as coming to Jesus. He himself said, "Come unto me." "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." Go to him, approach him in desire and determination, and that will be faith in Christ. Though you creep to him as the poor lame man, or grope your way to him as the poor blind man, that will constitute a saving channel between you and Christ. But do you say, that you are so utterly impotent as to be unable to move to him, in any way? Then Jesus in the Gospel is offered to you as the free and unspeakable gift of God. Stretch forth thy hand and receive that gift, and that will constitute between thy soul and Christ the channel of communication. But do you say that your arm is so paralyzed by sin that it hangs powerless at your side, and that you cannot stretch it forth? Then the Gospel represents Jesus as the most attractive, charming object in the universe. Look unto him, and that will answer for saving faith. But do you say, Alas! sin has so filmed and weakened your eyes that you cannot see him? Then

poor sinner, if you can do nothing else lie still just as you are, and "submit to the righteousness of God," allowing Jesus to throw over thee the robe of his righteousness, and that will answer for faith in Christ, for "*whosoever will*" may take him for a Saviour. What is it to believe in Christ? It is to hear him when he calls; obey him when he commands; tremble when he threatens, and trust him when he promises. It is to build on him as our foundation, enter him as our refuge, appropriate him as our propitiation, confide in him as our guide, apply to him as the balm of Gilead, and feed on him as the bread of life. In a word it is to accept him as God's greatest gift for all the purposes he is appointed to accomplish.

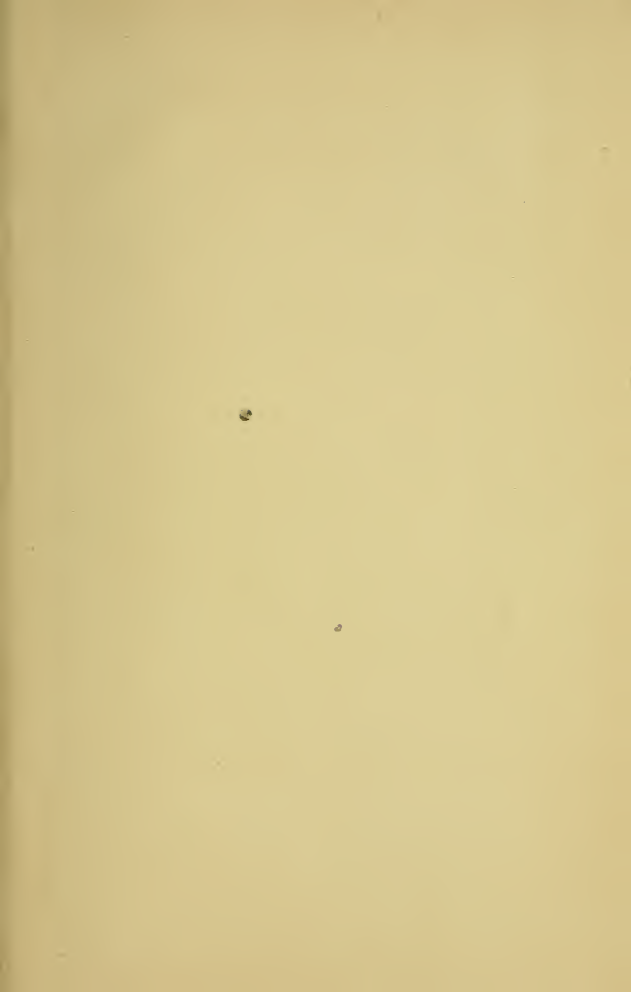
2. Having seen how awakened sinners are made partakers of Christ's pardoning and regenerating fulness, a second *question is, how are Christians to make the most of his fulness in their religious growth.* Having seen how Christ is of God made unto the sinner wisdom and righteousness, the question arises how is he to be made unto the justified believer, sanctification? It cannot be denied that the standard of personal religion with the mass of professors is distressingly low. Before Christianity achieves the general triumphs that await

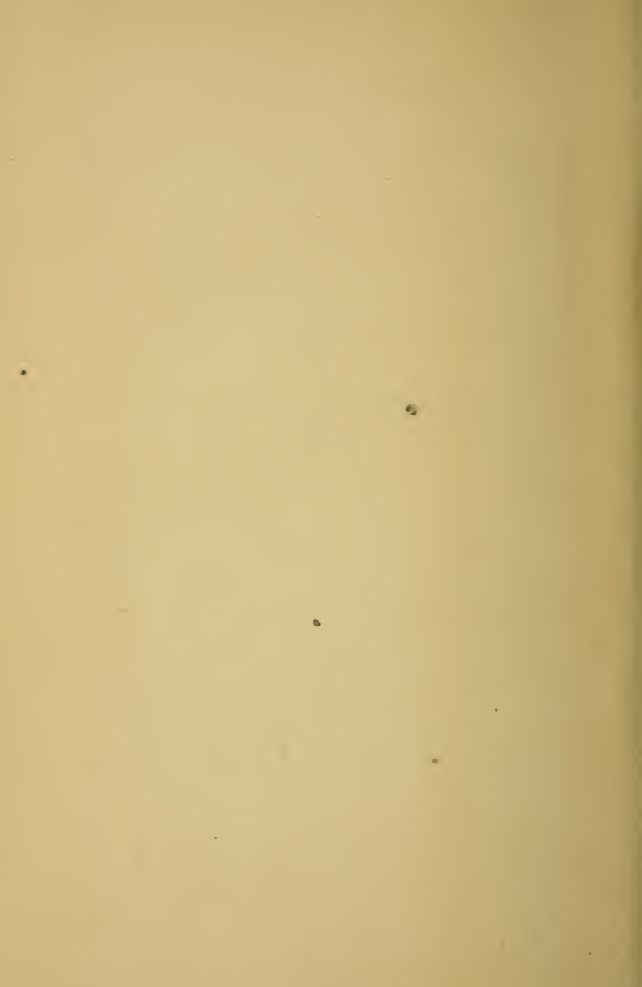
her, there must be a general and great improvement in Christian character; and what is the best way to effect this improvement is an inquiry inferior in importance to no other. Many plans are proposed, such as fasting, prayer, self-examination, and exertions to do good. But of all means, for the thorough and speedy improvement of our religious character, habitual application to the fulness of Christ is the most efficacious. The best means of religious growth is the continuance of the same faith that secures to the soul pardon and regeneration. Our meagre attainments in religion arise from our practically regarding the faith that saves as an isolated act, at the commencement of our religious life, instead of a life-long habit. Genuine faith is not a single application to Christ, but a continued exercise. The growing Christian is not one that *came* and transacted an affair with Christ, and then has nothing more to do with him, but one that *cometh* to Christ. The apostle Peter seems to exclude those from genuine religion whose faith is a single action, instead of a course of action. "To whom *coming* as unto a living stone." We sin constantly; and as we contract fresh guilt are called on to perform new duties, bear new trials, and resist new temptations, we need continually to apply to him. We should not, as is



the custom of some, reserve the atonement as a high mystery to be contemplated on special occasion, but we should turn it to daily practical account. We will go just so far in religion, as we believe in Christ, and no farther. Our eminence in religion—our zeal, humility, courage, prayerfulness, patience, and joy—will be just in proportion to the frequency and confidence of our applications to the fulness of Christ. No effect can exceed its cause. There are no other resources adequate to secure and prompt to holiness of heart and character, but the sufficiency of Christ. Dissevered from this, we will sink to the level of those around us. Hear the experience of Richard Baxter. Referring to a certain temptation he says, “From this I was forced to take notice that our belief is the spring of all grace; and with it rises or falls, flourishes or decays, is actuated or stands still; and that there is more of this secret unbelief than most of us are aware of; and that our love of the world, our boldness in sin, our neglect of duty, are caused hence; I easily observe in myself that if at any time Satan more than at other times weakened my belief in Christ my zeal in every religious duty abated with it, and I grew more indifferent in religion than before. But when faith revived, then none of the

- parts or concerns of religion seemed small ; and then man seemed nothing, the world a shadow, and God was all." An abiding faith in Christ makes a strong will ; and this will induce perseverance, energy, and holy achievement. Of all ways habitual faith in Christ is the quickest and most efficient to make the spirit erect, resolute, bold, pure, and indefatigable. In simple daily confidence in the Redeemer, are all the elements of perfect holiness and Christ-like perfection. The greatest act of the soul is to rely on its all-sufficient Saviour. Do this, and all else in religion will follow. Christians ! would you be enabled to walk in the way of the Ten Commandments, imitate in your measure the character of your Saviour ; make the greatest possible attainment in purity, do the greatest amount of good, live the firmest, happiest life attainable in this world, make the best preparation to die triumphly, and in all glorify your Saviour upon the largest scale. Then see to it that the life you live in the flesh you live by the faith of the Son of God who loved you and gave himself for you.







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